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ABSTRACT

The four issues of the journal, dated fall 1993 through summer 1994, contain articles on a variety of issues in literacy education. The first focuses on the role of literacy education in international economic development, and contains descriptions of a number of programs and strategies in both developing and industrialized nations. The second looks at literacy education issues from the perspectives of the employer, university professor, school teacher, student, and parent. The third issue has a dual focus: (1) the role of literacy and literacy education in the justice system, particularly prison education, and (2) violence against women as a barrier to their literacy education. Francophone literacy in Canada is the theme of the fourth issue, with articles in both English and French. Articles describe specific programs or address current issues in literacy education for francophones and French-English bilinguals. Book reviews, professional news and announcements, and tutoring tips are also included in each issue. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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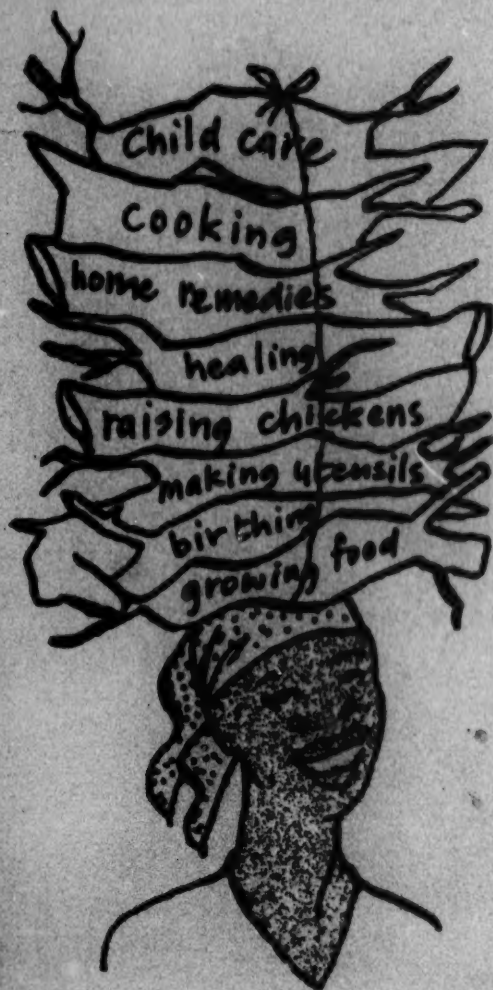
LITERACY WORKS

Vol. 5, No. 1

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Fall 1993

LITERACY AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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Ved Arora, Hilary Craig, Brenda Storry, Ron Torgerson

Literacy Works Editor

Liz Ormiston

Editor's note

The maps in this issue of *Literacy Works* are from a computer graphics program. They are intended to give readers a general idea of the whereabouts of the projects profiled. In places where land and border disputes are occurring the maps may not be totally accurate.

Contributors this issue

Judith Marshall, Robin Stonehouse, Fred Harland, Michelle Hibler, Hilary Craig, Doris Lessing, Hans Zell, Adriane Paavo, Gregory Hadley, Kate Allen, John Ingulsrud, Dr. Adele Jones, Martine Wowoe, Adrienne Clements, John Stackhouse, Jim Rader, Debra Brin, Donald MacLeod

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The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for \$5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

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- Vol. 3, No. 1 Women and Literacy
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- Vol. 4, No. 1 New Canadians and Literacy
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- Vol. 4, No. 3 Update Issue
- Vol. 4, No. 4 Native Education and Literacy

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

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For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236.

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THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

When **UNESCO** declared 1990 to be the **International Literacy Year**, it was using the following statistics as the basis for the plan to eliminate illiteracy by the year 2000.

Number of illiterates and illiteracy rates in 1985 for the adult population aged 15 and over



	Absolute number of illiterates 15 and over (in millions)	Illiteracy rates aged 15 and over (in percents)		
		Men	Women	Both
World total	888.7	20.5	34.9	27.7
Developing Countries	868.9	27.9	48.9	38.2
Least Developed Countries	120.8	56.9	78.4	67.6
'Developed' Countries	19.8	1.7	2.6	2.1
Africa	161.9	43.3	64.5	54.0
Latin America	43.6	15.3	19.2	17.3
Asia	665.7	25.6	47.4	36.3
Oceania	1.6	7.6	10.2	8.9
Europe (including USSR)	13.9	1.6	3.0	2.3

Source: UNESCO Office of Statistics, *The Current Literacy Situation in the World*, (UNESCO, July 1985).

EDITORIAL

Literacy a key part of "human-centred" development

By Judith Marshall

To pose questions about literacy is to pose questions about power and voice and whose experiences and language are validated in text. Whatever the dimensions of human liberation attached to literacy, literacy is always also about governance and being governed. It is never simply a question of acquiring reading and writing skills but also a question of accessing new social spaces and challenging power relations. The

tensions between literacy as a project of human liberation and literacy as a project of social control are all played out within the context of a complex and changing interplay of language meanings and practices, based as much on class, race and gender as on grammar and syntax.

To pose questions about international development is also to pose questions about power — and 500 years of colonial and neocolonial dictate in which the

languages and cultures of colonized peoples have been systematically denigrated. Colonial school systems included monitors to punish children caught using their mother tongues. The few who successfully negotiated the colonial curriculum had to distance themselves from their own time, space and culture, adopting the history, geography and civilization of Europe as their cultural reference points.

Whatever successes post-colonial governments may have had in the 1960s and 1970s in tackling illiteracy by expanding their schooling systems and establishing mass adult literacy programs have been erased during the 1980s by the structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The orthodox structural adjustment package includes massive cuts in social sector spending and a decentralization of responsibility for social services to weak local governments with no revenue base. The elite resolve the problem by organizing private schooling for their children; the children of the poor are left to the mercy of overcrowded, under-funded state schools and the odd Non Governmental Organization (NGO) mop-up operation. Their parents are too busy in the hustle of multiple survival

schemes to keep up with adult literacy.

Meanwhile, popular organizations in the Third World struggle both on issues of survival and on broader issues of building democratic spaces and defending human

rights. In these organizations, literacy emerges again as an important tool for bottom-up organization. By this I mean a kind of social literacy in which people build up a critical consciousness about the power structures in which they are located. Their own knowledge and sense-making processes are validated. Women in community kitchens and men in agricultural cooperatives gain confidence that their experiences are important and worth communicating to others. They discover that their voices can be effective in accessing resources and making demands on government structures or local elites. They discover allies and new forms of solidarity.

Many NGOs and popular organizations in the Third World are committed to building alternatives to the export-driven economies advocated by proponents of structural adjustment. The key development issue for them is building a strong civil society in which ordinary citizens can work through community groups or trade unions or women's organizations for democratic spaces, for equality and for respect for diversity. Questions of literacy and power are central to the kind of human-centred development to which they are committed.

Judith Marshall, of Toronto, is the author of Training for Empowerment, a kit of materials for popular literacy workers based on an exchange among educators from Mozambique, Nicaragua and Brazil. (See ad page 29.)



Fresh approach needed to keep people reading and writing

By Robin Stonehouse



Midst the fervour of new nationhood Tanzania embarked on a national literacy campaign during the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was able to change its literacy rate from 17 percent in 1960 to 91 percent in 1985. However, in the 1980s, Tanzania began to see a decline in attendance

at post-literacy classes and an erosion of its literacy rate. This led to several major studies in the late 1980s and 1990s to identify the barriers and to make recommendations to reverse the trend.

In 1967, President Nyerere launched his policy of socialism and self-reliance. In the school system it was called Education for Self-Reliance. Following the lead of UNESCO's World Literacy Programme, it centered on functional literacy, particularly better methods in agriculture and animal husbandry. The campaign was centrally directed and included political education to support the one-party socialist government. This excerpt from a primer illustrates this:

Swahili	English
*Tanu ni Chama	Tanu is a Party
Tanu imeleta Uhuru	Tanu has brought independence
Tanu imelita usawa	Tanu has brought equality
Andika	Write
Chama cha tanu huleta mena	Tanu brings good things ¹

"The political element in the literacy campaigns in the early 1970s enchanted the masses because of such Party goals as freedom, equality and democracy — concepts which raised a lot of hope among the workers and peasants"². The economy performed well from 1969 to 1974 but droughts followed by war with Uganda in 1978 saw people's hopes dashed. The central government kept pushing the mass literacy campaigns, but the people saw that literacy alone was not going to change their lives. Attendance at literacy classes after 1975 became sporadic. National literacy testing often spawned short-lived literacy classes to prepare for them. The following chart shows the results of the national literacy testing.³

Literacy rates in Tanzania, 1975-1987

Year	1975	1977	1981	1983	1986
Literacy rate	61%	73%	79%	85%	91%

Source: Ministry of Education, Department of Adult Education

Post-literacy classes are estimated to be attended only by one-third of adults. The most popular class is on health. Men were more likely to choose courses on agriculture and business while women chose child care and family planning. Poor attendance has caused concern in Tanzania. Organizers fear the loss of literacy skills, and they want to identify the causes.

Villagers generally don't know about the classes. Others cannot afford the cost or the time. Many no longer see the classes as relevant to their needs.

Women face particular barriers to gaining literacy. They experience an unequal access to resources and an unequal division of labour. Their heavy workload in the home is in addition to their toil in the fields, leaving little time available for classes. Cultural stereotypes of mother, nurturer, women as inferior and less intelligent preclude their participation.

Delivering the literacy classes is a demoralized cadre of teachers. Promises of honorariums have not been kept. Compounding the delivery is a pedagogy that is based on primary school, and is sadly lacking in resources.

To turn Tanzanian literacy back to its historical successes, researchers are recommending a community-based, learner-centered approach to literacy. Besides a more grassroots approach, they are also recommending a more co-ordinated effort between organizations and ministries undertaking similar activities.

*Tanu — the ruling political party of Tanzania

- 1 Carr-Hill, Roy., *The functioning and effects of the Tanzanian literacy programme*, p. 20
- 2 Carr-Hill, Roy., *The functioning and effects of the Tanzanian literacy programme*, p. 22
- 3 Carr-Hill, Roy., *The functioning and effects of the Tanzanian literacy programme*, p. 20

Robin Stonehouse has been active in literacy for many years. He is a former president of the Canadian Movement for Literacy. He currently works in Adult Basic Education for the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST) in Saskatoon.

The Tanzania Saskatchewan connection

Robin Stonehouse and Fred Harland of SIASST's International Office visited Tanzania in June, 1993 to begin the implementation of a four-year literacy project. Sustaining Tanzanian Literacy is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency through the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. It tries to strengthen the National Literacy Centre and the Adult Education Movement of Tanzania in their post-literacy work to maintain and enhance people's literacy abilities.

The project takes as a starting point the conclusions outlined by Robin in the above article. That is, the enormous gains of Tanzania's mass literacy campaigns are being eroded and can only be regained through literacy efforts which are community-based and learner-centred.

The project begins with Tanzanian-based research into appropriate post-literacy models. Focusing on experience from Tanzania, but also examining successful approaches from other countries, this research will identify appropriate methods of work at the community level. It will also detail the training, educational materials and other supports needed. The project includes training of facilitators, development of appropriate materials, piloting of the model developed and dissemination of project results.

A Project Review Committee of Tanzanian literacy practitioners meets annually with SIASST for ongoing planning and review. This committee hopes that the project will lead to further support for post-literacy work in Tanzania as well as to further collaboration between people involved in literacy in Tanzania and Saskatchewan.

— Fred Harland

Harsh conditions make literacy training a challenge

By Michelle Hibler



Some 13 years ago, most of the 80,000 inhabitants of the Bunkpurugu area of northern Ghana were illiterate. Today, with support from the Canadian voluntary development agency CUSO, close to 4,000 adults have learned to read and write in the local dialect, Moar, and 1,600 students from

10 to 50 years old are enrolled in a literacy program. More than 120 volunteer teachers work in 40 villages, teaching reading and arithmetic, and at the same time imparting information on health, nutrition, hygiene, women's issues and agriculture.

The seeds for this remarkable change were sown in 1972 when graduates of the literacy program launched by the Wycliffe Bible Institute joined to form the Bimoba Literacy Union. Economic activities were soon needed to support their literacy efforts. The work expanded to farming, agricultural extension, cooperatives, building roads and digging wells. In 1981, they formally established the Bimoba Literacy and Farmers' Cooperative Union (BILFACU) as an independent, community-based organization. Its mandate is to mobilize the community for development

through literacy classes, farmers' cooperatives, women's small businesses, and the construction of community facilities such as schools. It operates in 48 villages in 13 zones in this remote rocky north-eastern corner of Ghana, near the border with Togo.

Life is hard for the region's residents. Farmland is scarce and soils are poor. The largely denuded land is heavily eroded by winds during the seven-month dry season, then by rains during the rainy season. The nearest town is some 35 kilometres and two hours drive away. Roads are often impassable.

These harsh conditions make literacy training a challenge for both teachers and students. At the start of the rainy season, from April to June, for example, attendance at classes plummets. Many classes even close down as villagers try to earn money to buy food to counter the seasonal shortages. After the rainy season, the program welcomes many children who cannot attend formal school because they are needed to herd the family's cattle.

It is even more difficult for women to find time in their daily schedule of child care, domestic chores and farming. Not surprisingly, women account for fewer than 600 of the students and only nine of the teachers. Raising these numbers is now one of the program's priorities.

The rapid increase in the number of both students and graduates led last year to the introduction of English classes.

Most materials for the literacy project are produced locally on a rural press set up last year because few printers could handle Moar characters. Topics range from childcare to Bimoba history, agriculture and folklore. To keep students reading and informed about local activities, the project also publishes a newsletter, *The Cockcrow*, that covers topics from malaria prevention to local news.

Credit for the program's success rests with the Bunkpurugu people who created BILFACU to stimulate local development. Over the years, the organization has been supported by a number of international donors, including CUSO, which works in partnership with BILFACU to ensure its viability. Through CUSO, local Canadian groups such as Literacy Northwest in Kenora, Ontario, have also contributed.

Michelle Hibler is writer/editor with CUSO in Ottawa. For more information about BILFACU and other CUSO programs, or about how you can contribute to CUSO's work as a volunteer, a cooperant or a donor, contact CUSO, 824C Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 1B6 (306-933-4346), or CUSO's national office at 135 Rideau St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 9K7.

Bunkpurugu region, northern Ghana: work at home, in the fields and at the market keeps many women from participating in the literacy program.

Photo credit: Bruce Paton



The African book famine

Introduction by Hilary Craig

In Canada, even non-readers are surrounded by the written word at every turn. We receive unsolicited flyers in our mailboxes, letters from our children's school, leaflets with our family allowance cheques, notices from our employers, pamphlets from the doctor's office. If we can read and choose to read, a staggering selection of books is there for the taking in the public library or the local bookstore.

In most of Africa the situation is quite different. Even those who can read often find any reading material difficult to find.

Early this year, while visiting Zimbabwe, I was struck by the shortage of written material. The main public library in Harare, the capital, (a city with a population of more than one million) would in no way compare with a branch library in Regina. Many of the books are 20 and 30 years old (they would have been discarded long ago by any Canadian library). There are only a handful of periodicals. Out of curiosity I consulted the card catalogue (there are no computers) to see what the library collection had on an issue of interest to many women of my age — breast cancer. There was no listing. There was only one book listed under **Cancer**.

In relation to local wages, books are horrendously expensive. It is true that there are more locally-published books, in all three major languages, than there were 10 years ago.

Once one goes to the rural areas of Zimbabwe, and to most of the rest of Africa, books are a precious commodity.

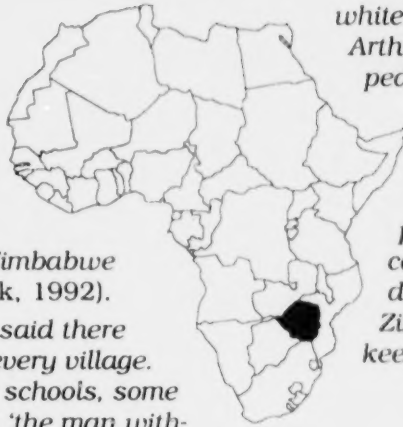
The following excerpts speak about this scarcity and its implications.



Authors deplore shortage of reading material

Doris Lessing, who grew up in Zimbabwe, requires no introduction. We appreciate her giving permission to publish the following excerpt from her most recent book, *African Laughter: Four Visits to Zimbabwe* (Harper Collins, New York, 1992).

President Mugabe has said there will be a good library in every village. I have been visiting more schools, some as bad as the one run by 'the man without character,' some good. But in very good schools there are empty shelves in rooms that call themselves libraries where books ought to be. Books written by African writers are all read to shreds. There are rejects from better libraries, and among them might be books the children would enjoy, but no attempt is made to differentiate between them. Perhaps the idea is, better any books than none at all. But there is such a hunger for books, for advice about books, in this country where the electronic revolution is yet to happen. Radios may or may not pick up the BBC or South Africa. There is little video, and a few programmes from The Open University, but only a minority benefits from these, since most schools do not have television. Books remain as influential as they ever were, in countries like Zimbabwe. It is not possible to exaggerate the influence of books, even one book. Dambudzo Marechera, the author of *House of Hunger*, described how, when he was a hungry child scrabbling for bits of food and clothing on the rubbish heaps attached to



white houses, he found a thrown-out Arthur Mee's Children's Encyclopedia. It changed his life. Yet even the big libraries in Harare and Bulawayo are short of funds. If you send them books, you may get a letter: I am sorry, please don't send any more, we cannot afford the Customs duties. Even the University of Zimbabwe library is not funded to keep itself up to date with books.

The following excerpt is from "Africa — the neglected continent," an article which appeared in *Logos* 1/2, Whurr Publishers, 1990. Author **Hans Zell** has written and consulted extensively on publishing and book development in Africa. This excerpt is printed with his permission and that of the publisher of *Logos*.

Collapsing economies and the chronic balance of payment problems in almost all countries of the African continent have taken a heavy toll on the educational budgets and, in turn, on libraries and the book industries. The picture of Africa at the end of the 1980s is largely of a bookless society. Not only has there been a dramatic decline of funds available for book and journal purchases, but because of the foreign exchange constraints, many university and public libraries in Africa have been unable to purchase any new

continued . . .

The African book famine *continued*

books over the past four or five years, much less to maintain their current periodicals collections. Bookshops have empty shelves; schools are without books; research has been crippled; teachers and scholars are divorced from the materials needed to pursue their studies, to maintain their understanding of developments in their disciplines elsewhere in the world, and to keep their teaching or research up-to-date. African academics are more and more marginalized, unable to participate in contemporary academic debates or conferences.

The scarcity of books has meant that neither the needs of educational institutions nor of the general public can be met. Devastating and quite possibly lasting damage is being inflicted across a whole generation going through primary, secondary and university education in Africa today. Students are being taught by lecturers who are unable to gain access to current research and scholarship. The lack of books and teaching materials has led to students having to rely on lecture notes provided by their teachers, which cannot be conducive to enlightened learning.

Meanwhile, in libraries the scanty provision of books and journals has led to their mutilation or outright theft. There is a great deal of talk nowadays about the marvels of the new technology. Most libraries in Africa today are not only not "on-line" to the technological advances and the new opportunities; they are, on the contrary, very much off-line to basic printed resources. And in many countries in Africa today libraries are becoming increasingly dependent on book donations from abroad.

There are numerous bilateral and multilateral programs of book and journal donations to Africa, and also small independent schemes in specialist areas such as medicine, law or biochemistry. The major schemes include the Overseas Development Administration Book Presentation Programme, various British Council schemes, the recently established international Campus Book Link, the Kanfurlly Library Service — which nowadays employs much more rigorous selection criteria, weeding out books that are irrelevant or out-of-date — and the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE). CODE not only donates books, but supports the publication of books, journals and teaching materials, and supplies paper and equipment, as well as supporting literacy projects. There are two recipient requested schemes, which have received wide acclaim. One is the Sub-Saharan Africa Journal Distribution Program, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science which provides science, engineering and other scholarly journals to some 200 university and research institution libraries in 35 countries. The other (albeit concentrating on Southeast Asia and the Pacific) is ACPAD — Australian Centre for Publications Acquired for Development — a book and journal donation scheme established under the auspices of the International Development Programme of Australian Universities and Colleges. ACPAD decided from the outset that material should not be sent unless specifically solicited by libraries.

For more information about Logos, write Whurr Publishers Ltd., Thomas Slatner and Co., 401 Baldwin Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey 07306, USA; telephone: (201) 656-1100.

Workers become "literate" in occupational health and safety

By Adriane Paavo

Mozambique, in southern Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world. Most Mozambicans cannot read or write. Workers earn very low wages and often cannot buy enough food each month to feed their families. In addition, many industrial workers face unsafe working conditions.

It would seem that literacy — learning to read and write — is a prerequisite to getting workers organized to improve their lives. But a special workplace safety program, initiated by a Canadian trade unionist, is helping Mozambican workers become literate in a broader sense — by gaining knowledge of safe working conditions and what it takes to implement them in their workplaces.

Mozambican workers spend many hours each day at their jobs. They know which machines are safe and which are dangerous. They know when a chemical or activity makes them sick. But often workers are too scared or worried to speak out. They think the boss will fire them if they ask for changes to be made. They think they are the only ones with the problem, that they are alone.

Unions in Canada have been struggling for better working conditions for many years. The Grain Services Union (GSU) has about 3,000 members in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. They work in grain elevators, seed-cleaning plants and flour mills. Grain dust was a serious health problem for these workers. The union forced the Canadian government to recognize this problem and make better laws. And the GSU continues to work hard to make elevators and flour mills safer for workers.



Working conditions in a Mozambican food-processing plant.

In the early 1980s, a Saskatchewan trade unionist working in Mozambique had a bright idea. He knew that unions in both Canada and Mozambique were concerned about health and safety on the job. He helped the GSU contact its sister union, the food workers' union in Mozambique, called SINTIAB. The two unions agreed to work together on this common problem.

In 1987, a GSU representative visited Mozambique and worked for six weeks in the country's largest food-processing factory. With Mozambican unionists, he began developing a plan. The two unions,

continued . . .

Workers become "literate" in occupational health and safety *continued*



GSU and SINTIAB, decided to open a health and safety centre in the capital city that could provide information to all workers and unions in the country. And they decided to train workers right in their workplaces to implement safe working conditions.

The GSU-SINTIAB project gives workers confidence. The training program helps them realize that they already have a lot of knowledge about their workplace, even though they can't read and write. It helps them identify problems and decide which problems are the most important. And it helps them work together through their

union to solve health and safety problems and make their workplaces healthier.

Even without literacy training in the traditional sense, workers in developing countries can become "literate" about their rights in the workplace. Through the work of the GSU-SINTIAB health and safety project, workers learn that they can have a powerful voice. And they learn that when they join their voices together, they can change their world.

Adriane Paavo has worked with the GSU-SINTIAB health and safety project since 1990, in both Mozambique and Canada. The project is funded by GSU members through a dues check-off and by Partnership Africa Canada, a federal funding agency.

For more information about the project, contact the Grain Services Union at 2334 McIntyre Street, Regina, Sask., S4P 2S2.



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of Non-English Speakers)



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Teaching in Japan: Getting "hooked" on English

By Gregory Hadley

I remember the first day I started at the Niigata English Language School. I was about a block from the school when I became lost in a noisy, crowded open-air market. I was rounding the corner when suddenly I came face to face with a huge, red, steaming octopus that had just been boiled and hung out on a hook to cool.

Even with the current recession, native English teachers in Japan are still in demand for several reasons. Problems with English education in the public schools is an important reason. National curiosity about foreigners is also a factor, as is the heavy turnover of teaching positions.

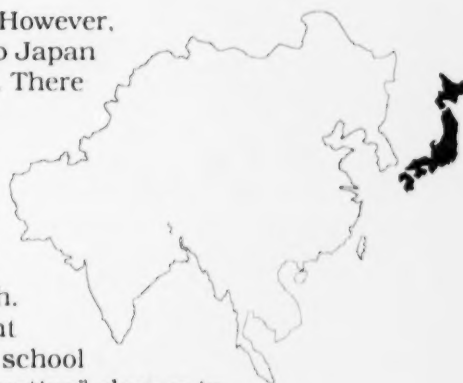
English is a required subject in Japanese schools. Most people have studied English for at least six years but still cannot communicate. Most of the blame falls on the Ministry of Education which requires difficult and tricky entrance examinations for high school and college. Students listen to lectures on English grammar and vocabulary in Japanese, with the goal of passing the entrance examinations. By all accounts, learning English in Japanese public schools is unpleasant.

Despite these bad experiences, many continue studying English as a hobby at *eikaiwa* (conversation) schools. Here, they finally get the chance to study English with a native speaker. Many come so they can find a safe place to talk to foreigners since most Japanese are too polite to strike up a conversation with a foreigner on a bus or train.

There are many reputable conversation schools in Japan, some of which offer

two-year degrees. However, teachers coming to Japan need to be careful. There are many schools which perform more a social and entertainment function than the actual teaching of English. Consider the recent case in Tokyo of a school that offers "conversation" classes in limousines! (McLean, 1992). One school here in Niigata only hires native speakers who are white, attractive, and preferably blonde. Sadly, this practice is not uncommon among some conversation schools, which treat students as customers, and mix entertainment with education. One quality most schools look for when hiring a prospective teacher is if she is *genki*, which means "lively" or "energetic." Classes, above all, must be fun. This assures the students will be back next week.

Teachers who are "caught" by these schools often become disillusioned and quit. Many teachers speak of feeling dehumanized. One colleague expressed it this way: "I feel like an animal, paid to perform in front of these people all day. And at night, I go home to my cage." Burnout is a big problem here. This means there will always be lots of job openings for "English teachers" here in Japan.



continued . . .

Teaching in Japan: Getting "hooked" on English *continued*

There have been times when many of us here have felt like that octopus I saw hanging on the hook. We've felt out of our element, on display, or something to be bought. But those who survive teaching here find ways to cope. Most find better schools. Some go to the college level. All strive to improve their classes, and teach those who want to learn. In the end, it all works out.

SOURCE: McLean, Paul. 1992, August. In Reply to Zafar N. Syed's "Critical Evaluation of Language Schools in Japan" (Feb., 1992). The Language Teacher, XV1:8 pp. 31.

Gregory Hadley is the Head Teacher at the Niigata English Language School, which offers a two-year English Business Degree. He has taught English as a Second Language and Literacy both as a volunteer and teacher in the United States.

Language of school not the same as language of home

By Kate Allen and John Ingulsrud

Learning to read in one's mother tongue may not be as commonplace as it might seem. In fact, it may be more the exception than the rule. Many children throughout the world do not become literate in a language spoken at home but in a language that is, to them, alien. This is the situation for many children in the People's Republic of China. The language of school is not the same as the language of home.

Since the 1950s, the government has dealt with this linguistic diversity by promoting Putonghua or "common speech" as the standard. Putonghua is



based, though not entirely, on the language spoken by the mandarin class in Imperial China. For most of the last six centuries, the capital has been located in Beijing and thus "mandarin" Chinese has been closely related to the variety spoken in that city.

Putonghua is officially the language of instruction. Consequently, a special course is offered in schools across the country to train children in the standard language. On average, 12 weeks of the first semester of Grade One are devoted to learning Putonghua. In some areas more time is taken; in other areas less. The aim of this course is two-fold.

On the one hand, children learn the pronunciation and vocabulary of Putonghua. And on the other, children learn the Roman alphabet that represents the sounds of Putonghua. The Romanization, called Hanyu Pinyin, is not learned for its own sake, even though it is used widely on signs and billboards. Hanyu Pinyin (Pinyin for short) is regarded only as a tool for learning the Chinese characters.

The course begins with the learning of vowels. This is followed by the consonants which are introduced from the front of the mouth. Subsequent forms are introduced in the order of articulation. Correct pronunciation is described by showing pictures of the cross-section of the mouth indicating tongue position.

Together with the oral training, the letters for Pinyin are introduced and the children learn to write them correctly. After the individual sounds are learned the teacher turns to syllables. At this stage, the teacher must deal with tones. For each syllable, the four tones of Putonghua are practiced. We have found

that, like many non-native learners of Chinese, the children seemed to have most trouble with the second (rising) tone.

With the syllables, the teacher can begin linking sound and meaning. The most common method to do so is by holding up a flash card with a syllable and a tone marker. The teacher then asks the class for examples of the syllable used in vocabulary. It is at this point that the pupils' dialect interference becomes apparent. In response to mistakes, teachers are not particularly sensitive. The teachers denigrate the local dialect calling it "wrong" or saying "it sounds ugly." In contrast, Putonghua is exhorted as sounding beautiful. The aesthetic value of Putonghua is emphasised over its communicative value.

Kate Allan and John Ingulsrud both teach at Nanjing University, Nanjing, China. They are currently involved in looking at how students in kindergarten are learning Putonghua. Their address is International Faculty Apartments, Nanjing University, Nanjing 210008, China.

Literacy Works Deadlines 1993-94

- Winter '93-94:** Youth and Literacy — Are Our Schools in Crisis?
(Deadline: October 15)
- Spring '94:** Literacy Programs within the Justice System
(Deadline: January 31)
- Summer '94:** Francophone and Other Minority Language Literacy
(Deadline: April 1)
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From small beginnings, adult literacy work has grown

By Dr. Adele Jones



The celebration

The celebrations for International Literacy Year (1990) were outstanding in Fiji. In Suva, activities throughout a week had thousands of people involved in stories, dances, food and crafts. The May celebrations were grand but by July the same people were looking around for the adult literacy classes.

This is the other side of awareness raising. Expectations were raised, so where to from there? The team of non-formal educators from the University of the South Pacific (USP), together with the Fiji Association of Non-formal Education (FANFE), established a new advertising campaign aimed at people who had not attended school or who had only a few years of formal schooling.

The classes

Classes held at the YWCA in Suva were advertised in the daily English language newspaper and on the radio in several languages — Fijian, Hindi and English. Over 50 people (mainly women) arrived for the first day. Four months later, 90 people were attending classes regularly.

Participants came from various language groups — Rotuman, Fijian, Hindi, Urdu and some other Pacific nations. Initially, classes were held daily for one hour. Four classes had to be held each day to cater to the large numbers.

Many had no literacy skills at all. As one woman explained, "After I get up at 4:30 and prepare breakfast for my husband, I get my work out and practice our sentences. I am so happy. This is like a dream because I never went to school." Others came in small groups for companionship. Another participant explained that in the beginning she was shy but that, having made so many friends, she was happy to come alone. For many of the Indian women, the classes were a new stage of independence. Some came at lunch hour or before the afternoon shift at the garment factories. A couple of others had 'older' professions. But many had lived quite traditional lives with no opportunity to gain literacy skills.

The materials

From the outset it was decided that the content should be linked closely with community development materials. Hence, posters and charts from organizations such as South Pacific Commission (SPC), World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Health and the National Food and Nutrition Council were invaluable. The posters were bright and colourful. Many featured women from various parts of the Pacific.

In time, some students began to produce booklets. For the 'new' students, these were recipe books. For those who

had more language exposure, it meant collecting traditional medicinal remedies and writing and illustrating them. Others wanted to write traditional stories and others still were encouraged to produce pamphlets related to making smokeless stoves. In some sessions, women prepared food and learned language appropriate to what they were doing.

The men's group was conducted independently, as most had some literacy skills and were working (many on the wharf) but wanted to improve specific skills related to work. Some of this included skills related to banking, taxation and employment. In the towns, literacy is seen to be directly related to job prospects.

The tutor training

Seven tutors (all women) came on their lunch hours. As requests for adult literacy classes were coming from all over Fiji, it became obvious that more tutors needed to be trained.

Later in the year, a two-week full time Adult Literacy/Basic Education Tutors' Course was conducted at USP. Participants came from industry (Colgate Palmolive) from the Women's Division, the Salvation Army (including an ex-prisoner), the army (field engineer), the police force, a co-ordinator from the YMCA and two community workers. Since then, some participants have set up basic education classes in their own areas.

Classes were very practically oriented and included methods of teaching adults and various approaches to teaching small groups. Participants produced materials

and their own stories and, in the second week, worked with small groups of literacy students in their own organization or at the YWCA. Other tutors gave practical sessions on reading medicine labels and designing simple instructions for people with low levels of literacy. Finally, participants asked for a video of the workshop so a practical video was made showing various techniques, including role plays. Videos are available from USP Institute of Education.

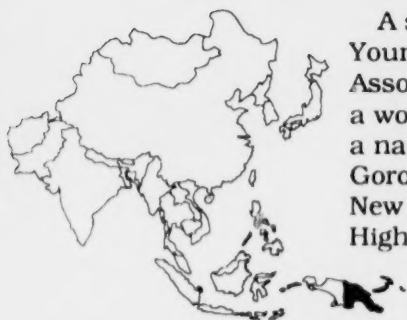
From there?

From these simple beginnings classes and venues have increased in Fiji. The Fiji Prison Service and the Fiji Association of Non-formal Educators have asked for more Tutor Training Workshops for their own tutors/would be tutors, as have some regional South Pacific countries with USP Centres.

Small beginnings can bear good fruit, but the trees must be nurtured along the way.

Dr. Adele Jones has published widely on adult literacy and development. This includes the Pacific Adult Literacy Series Books 1-4. She has been involved in adult literacy tutor training in the South Pacific and has conducted planning workshops for co-ordinators of adult literacy in Australia.

Quiet revolution in the highlands



A sign on the wall of the Young Women's Christian Association says "Educate a woman and you educate a nation." The place is Goroka, capital of Papua New Guinea's Eastern Highlands Province. An unlikely place for a revolution, but this is a special kind of revolution.

The YWCA hummed with activity as 50 women sat on mats in small groups learning maths, reading and writing in tok pisin (pidgin), one of Papua New Guinea's two national languages. For most of the women, this was their first chance to receive education. Most women spoke four or five languages, including their tok ples or tribal tongue, neighbouring tribal languages, tok pisin, and sometimes English. Despite their impressive language skills, women's literacy rates in Papua New Guinea are as low as one in four. This is a major handicap for the country's women. Many families cannot raise the fees for secondary schooling and, due to custom, preference is usually given to educating boys. Traditionally, girls are more valued for their bride price and for their work in gardens and homes.

Wind of change

In 1988, the YWCA built a training centre. Through the Australian Volunteer Abroad program, the Overseas Service Bureau arranged for a young Australian, Debbie Chapman, to help set up and run the centre. Over the next three years, Debbie became a catalyst for a quiet revolution, complete with its own cadres, now spreading throughout the province.

Instead of flying in and immediately beginning teaching, Debbie spent the first five months talking with women about their education and training needs. Literacy in tok pisin and numeracy emerged as the prime needs. The Goroka YWCA Women's Literacy Program was born.

In helping set up the program, Debbie worked closely with her counterpart, Anna Maben, who is now the coordinator for the centre. Over the next three years Debbie, Anna and their team trained about 140 volunteer teachers from 35 villages throughout the province. After completing as little as one week of training, the volunteers returned to their villages to teach. The enthusiasm of the volunteers and their students was evident. In Goroka and the villages many women walked for up to an hour to attend classes.

Literacy opens the door to information on malnutrition, malaria, family planning and other health issues. In rural areas there was a high level of interest in environment issues and agriculture. Anna said that literacy boosted the women's self-confidence, enabled them to play a greater role in all spheres of life and helped prevent them from being tricked about money.

Resource base

The training centre also serves as a resource and training centre for the province. Anna said that during the past six years the women have used silk screen printing to make books without the benefit of a photocopier. Traditional stories are popular and enable the women to further enrich their families lives. Unfortunately the books don't last long because of their popularity and the basic conditions in most villages and settlements.

The work of the centre benefits many people. The women said that their husbands and families were becoming increasingly supportive of their efforts to learn. As well as literacy classes, the centre operated a kindergarten, a hostel for young women, and provided literacy training for prisoners in Bihute prison, near Goroka.

Challenges

One of the centre's biggest challenges is finding funds to pay wages. This year, the Save the Children Fund (UK) is helping to pay Anna's wages, but most teachers work on a voluntary basis. Anna and the centre's president, Cynthia Leahy, are able to gain some funding support from other sources such as the YWCA in Australia.

The centre generates some income by providing English classes for the staff of local businesses. This year lessons in tok pisin and PNG culture were provided to a group of Swiss volunteers.

Because of the success of the literacy program and the growth in demand for training, the YWCA needs a new building. The present centre has small offices at each end of an open space area. This is open space in the purest sense: there are no walls! With four or more classes in



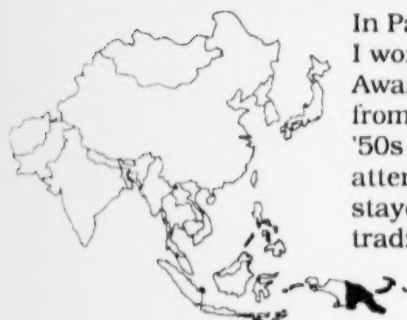
progress at once, the buzz of voices must make listening and learning difficult. Yet no one complains.

What began as a pilot women's literacy project has now been adopted as a model for many other women's groups. Despite limited funding, the women are doing everything they can to learn and play a greater role in Papua New Guinea.

This article is reprinted from Women's News.

One volunteer's story

By Martina Wowoe



In Papua New Guinea, I work as a Literacy and Awareness teacher. I am from Goroka. Before the '50s and '60s mainly boys attended school. Girls just stayed home. It was our tradition that girls will do the gardening and when they grow up they will get married and have children. Because of this way of thinking over 70 to 80 percent of people are illiterate. They cannot read and write. Sixty-five percent of this number are women.

Anyway, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Goroka started a school for any age — young girls, old women, young mothers. They started this school to assist women to stop thinking that they are nobody. So it was started in 1988. I came and started working as a teacher, teaching English and Pisin (that's our national language). I didn't complete my secondary school to become a teacher. You do not have to go to universities to work with a community.

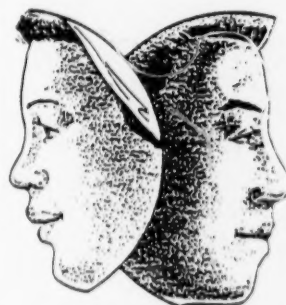
The Papua New Guinea Integral Human Development Trust provides training for people like myself who are working with grassroots level people. So I attended their course for a month and then I train others in some of the remote parts of

Papua New Guinea through workshops. A lot of women attend these rural workshops that also teach sewing, cooking and family planning besides reading and writing skills.

As a result of these rural grassroots workshops we notice some changes in the women in the provinces and communities. Before when husbands say things they just follow or do it. But now they are starting to talk about their rights and consult their husbands on important issues.

On another note, I am an actor and a writer. I write stories about family planning, health, environment and AIDS. I seek the assistance of women (mothers) to perform the plays with me in the rural areas. These sessions also help the women understand the play's message a bit more.

I have been working as a volunteer without pay until now 1992. I am very happy about my work because when I teach a mother who cannot read and write and in a few weeks she read or write, that's my pay.



This article is reprinted from Women's News.

YWCA program empowers women

By Adrienne Clements

World wide it is generally agreed that there is a high collaboration between illiteracy levels and underdevelopment. High infant mortality rates, low income, shorter life expectancy, few educational opportunities, lack of nutrition and health care are all associated with both high illiteracy levels and underdevelopment. Throughout Pakistan, literacy rates for women are estimated at only 23 percent; in many of the villages the rate stands at zero percent.

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) is committed to working with women to help them achieve improvements in their lives and empowerment of themselves. The YWCA's integrated approach addresses the needs of the whole person. Being illiterate means, among many things, not being able to access local health care systems, not being able to take out a small business loan and not being able to participate fully in the political development of one's community.

In 1989, women from 12 Pakistani communities approached the YWCA to ask for assistance in setting up literacy courses for themselves and other local women. With its goal of helping women improve their lives, the YWCA was quick to take up the challenge.

In 12 centres across Pakistan, six-month literacy and skills-training courses were established. Each course accommodates 20 to 35 women and draws on the experience of the women for learning materials. Primers were developed using the women's own stories as the bases of the text. Skills such as sewing, cutting

and basic health care are taught. As well, basic legal awareness, courses on the New Islamic Laws, women's rights and environmental awareness are taught and discussed.

The methodological basis of this program is one of learner initiative and group participation. As described so well by Laubach International, this type of learning emphasizes the mastery of the learning process along with the acquisition of basic skills. It creates an environment which enables students to question the conditions under which they are living. Action, application and change are integral to the learning process. The overriding goal of the process is to empower the participants to become the designers of their own future.

Providing education for women in Pakistan is not always easy. The tradition of Purdah (women living behind the veil) defines a role for women that does not include higher education. And for many, higher education means literacy. Men often have to be convinced that teaching women literacy will not corrupt them with 'city ways'. And often it has to be demonstrated to the women themselves



continued . . .

YWCA program empowers women *continued*

that what they will be learning will be directly related to their daily lives. Purdah is often found to be strongest in the rural and poorer areas, the very areas in which the YWCA is working.

But the women have asked for these literacy and skills-training programs. In order to meet their needs but not create greater conflicts, the programs are flexible. Many women cannot attend the more formally-structured classes. Building on the local custom of women visiting each other, the literacy worker will also visit and provide literacy training in the home. Teaching practical skills that benefit families and communities has also made the courses more acceptable.

Women are key change agents in their communities. Through empowerment

women will be able to unlock their abilities. Literacy is one of the most important tools in helping women become the designers of their own futures.



Adrienne Clements is director of International Cooperation for the YWCA of Canada in Toronto. For more information on this program contact the YWCA at 80 Gerrard St. East, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1G6 or telephone: (416) 593-9886.

In Kerala State, India

Literacy helps defuse the population bomb

By John Stackhouse, Development Issues Reporter, Trivandrum, India
Reprinted from the Globe and Mail, March 1, 1993

Near the southern tip of India, a full moon rises over the coconut palms illuminating the dirt path to a house in the village of Vattiyoorkavu.

After a day in the rice fields, a dozen men and women have laid down their tools and come for their nightly literacy class. But the session is less about reading and writing than about child health care, smokeless stoves, water management — and Marxist philosophy.

"This class has become the most important part of my day," said Anita, 23.

In tropical Kerala, a state of white beaches, vibrant green banana plantations and 29 million people, the ideology that has been discarded almost everywhere else in the world continues to hold sway. And with no shortage of success.

Marxist-inspired policies have erased belts of poverty, reduced infant mortality, increased the status of women to Western levels and brought about a dramatic demographic shift.

The rest of India seems at times to be overrun by a population juggernaut, but in less than 30 years Kerala has cut its fertility rate in half to about 2.2 children per woman — slightly more than half the national rate and lower than that of China, Russia, Thailand and Ireland.

Anita, like most of the women in Vattiyoorkavu literacy class, was sterilized after having her second child, following the class's motto for married couples: "We are two, we will have two."

"Everyone else in India has it wrong," said K.N. Raj, one of Kerala's foremost development experts. "They talk about family planning and then do nothing for infant health, for education, for literacy. In Kerala, we've never done anything big for family planning, but we've done a great deal for those other things."

The concentration on improving lives rather than cutting births has left Kerala with a functional literacy rate of 90 per cent — about double the Indian average.

Infant mortality is 17 per 1,000 live births, about one-quarter the Indian average. The birth rate is on a par with New Zealand's.

Demographers credit what they call the four m's: maternal health care, matriarchy, maharajas and Marxism.

Good health care means mothers know their children stand a good chance of surviving, so there is no need to bear many children as insurance. A matriarchal system of inheritance, absent from the rest of India, means most women are not fully dependent on their husbands. The 19th century maharajas who ruled the state inaugurated free and compulsory primary education. And the policies of the Marxists who have ruled Kerala for much of the postindependence period have empowered and enriched its poor, reducing the need for large families.



Health care consumes 17 per cent of the state budget. No town is without a hospital, no village is more than three kilometres from a public health centre and every community is served by an all-weather road. "To be honest, our work is much easier than in other states," said P.S. Ramakrishnan, director of Kerala's family welfare program.

If health care seems like a priority in Kerala, education is an obsession. Every village has a primary school and library. Literacy drives are reinforced by a mass volunteer system, called the Movement for Scientific Progress, in which thousands of citizens take Gandhi's dictum, "Each one, teach one," and change it to "Each one, teach 10."

Although it is 30 years ahead of India in birth rates, literacy and health care, Kerala is not without its problems. Many conservative economists believe it has spent too much on education and health and not enough on job-creating investment such as irrigation and industrial development for the state's three million unemployed.

The Latin American literacy experience — case study: Nicaragua

By Jim Rader



In 1979, Nicaragua had one of the highest levels of illiteracy in Latin America: more than 52 percent of the adult population could not read or write.

Keeping the majority of the people illiterate fit the interests of the Somoza family who had ruled the country in a dictatorial manner since 1935.

That situation changed in July, 1979, with the triumph of the Sandinista popular revolution. Pledging to rule for the benefit of the majority, the new leaders announced two weeks after coming to power that they would organize a national literacy campaign based on the teachings of Paulo Freire.

Freire, a Catholic from Brazil, has dedicated his life to adult education and community organizing. Working with the poor in the northeast of this country, he came to realize that the educational system, or lack of one, in any particular society was set up to protect the interests of the ruling groups and that in many cases the system discouraged people from learning.

In his experience, one of the most effective ways to motivate people to learn to read and write was to try and relate literacy to the social and political issues

which were most important in their lives. Once the most important themes — be they racism, inadequate housing, sexism, unemployment, etc. — were identified through discussion with the students, certain code words related to the themes could then be used as the starting point for the literacy program.

As important as the process of learning to read and write was the process of political conscientization which occurred through Freire's method. Once the students gained an awareness of their social and political reality, they could then begin to look for ways of changing it. This process Freire called "empowerment."

The Sandinistas decided to use Freire's method because it seemed most in tune with the social transformations which were taking place in their country. However, Freire's method had been developed for work in small communities; no one had attempted to use it to teach 50 percent of the population of a country to read and write.

Almost 100,000 people were trained to be literacy teachers in Nicaragua, including 52,000 high school and university students and 27,000 workers and housewives. Approximately 60 percent of the literacy teachers were women. As well as Spanish, classes were offered in English and the indigenous languages of Sumu and Miskito.

Following Freire's method, the first words that the students learned to read and write were "la revolucion." It was a fortunate choice. Not only did it give the teachers and the learners a chance to talk about what was, for many, the most

important social change in their lives up until that point, but the two words contained all of the five vowels found in the Spanish language!

From March to August of 1980, it was estimated that over 400,000 people learned to read and write, including over 210,000 women. Illiteracy, it was estimated, dropped to 12.9 percent. Equally as important was the opportunity the literacy campaign gave to the people of Nicaragua to discuss and absorb in a collective manner what this new thing called "revolucion" was.

In September of 1980, Nicaragua was given international recognition for its efforts in literacy with the bestowing of two UNESCO prizes. More important than that recognition were the hundreds of thousands of people conscientized and empowered by the campaign to take responsibility for improving their own social and political reality. Despite some of the set-backs of the last few years, that process of social transformation still goes on in Nicaragua today.

Pablo Martinez Viquez was a union organizer and leader for over 20 years before the Sandinista revolution in 1979. He learned to read and write in the literacy campaign of 1980. He commented to me once that one of the proudest moments in his life was when he was finally able to sign his name to a list of demands for improved conditions for workers.

He continued active in workers' issues right up until the time of his death in a traffic accident in January of 1993. This article is dedicated to him.



Jim Rader is a former Saskatchewan resident who worked in Nicaragua as the Field Staff Officer for CUSO from 1988-92. He has recently returned to Canada.

Teaching in Mexico: learning to make mistakes

By Debra Brin



A few years ago I had the wonderful opportunity to teach English in Mexico. The city I lived in had a tourist-based economy and the ability to speak English could improve a person's income dramatically. There is an incredible difference between what a worker makes selling chiclets in the traffic jams and what can be earned working in a tourist hotel.

At my interview for the job, I told the director of the school that I had no experience teaching English but I had many years experience speaking it and I had been reading books about language acquisition. That was enough to get started with two classes — one with teenaged students and the other with adults. I had no idea how much I was about to learn about learning.

One of the most important discoveries for me was how much of a barrier our fear of making mistakes can be. My classes had been up and running for some time but progress had been slow because I didn't want to make anyone uncomfortable by forcing them to participate before they were ready. Then one day both classes agreed to learn to sing an English song for the school festival. They chose the song "Ninety-Nine Red Balloons" because it sounded nice. But they didn't

know what it was about so I decided that we would also use it for our English lesson. The teaching method I was using was based on pantomime or acting. This way the participants have to think actively about the meaning rather than just wait for the translation. A song, however, created difficulties so I found myself using my far-from-perfect Spanish to explain the meaning of it. Now, the word for balloon in Spanish is very similar to the word for red blood cell so I ended up telling the story of "Ninety-Nine Red Blood Cells!"

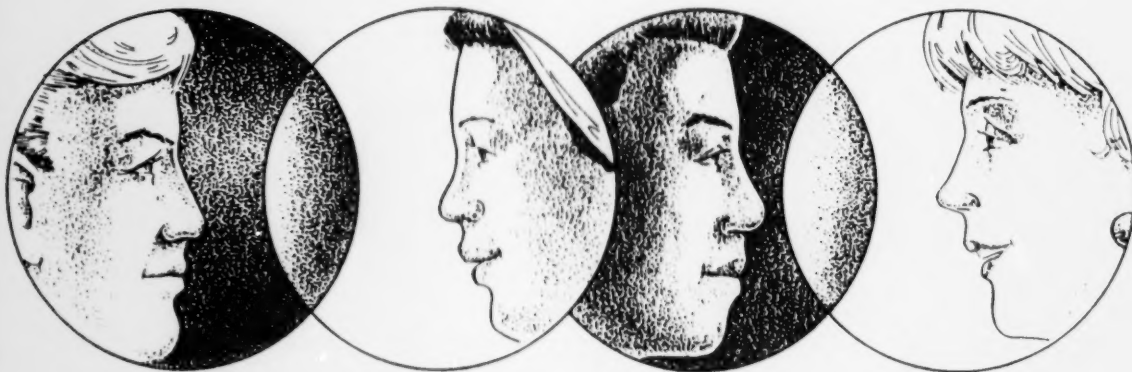
It was my adult class that hesitantly pointed out my mistake to me. They had caught on immediately because of my gestures (blowing up a balloon and setting it free). The next day I asked class number one if they had figured out what I was talking about the day before. They informed me that they had but they didn't want to embarrass me by pointing it out. That night I thought about mistakes and how we are taught to react to them. I'm very lucky to have parents that believed that, as long as it wasn't dangerous, children should be encouraged to explore and try things without a lot of interference and "learn from their mistakes." I didn't care much for school where I found the attitude was different. There, we were praised and rewarded for doing as we were told and punished with the stigma of getting a bad mark if we got too creative and didn't pay close attention to the way things were supposed to be done. Instead of having the freedom to examine different ideas and learn from mistakes, we were taught to feel ashamed of them.

Fear of making mistakes prevents many people from learning. They don't want to take a chance at trying something new because they fear they won't get it perfect on the first try. Nearly everything we do is accompanied by mistakes at the beginning. Nobody learns to walk or ride a bike without falling down. Nobody starts to talk in perfect sentences.

Now that we are adults, we have to unlearn our fear of making mistakes. We have to remember that every participant in our class is there to learn and everyone is going to make their own mistakes on the road to getting it right. It's a natural part of learning.

I talked about this with my classes and found out that Mexican schools also teach this fear of making mistakes. Participation improved a lot after we decided it was okay to make mistakes and we even got comfortable enough to giggle at some of the humorous ones!

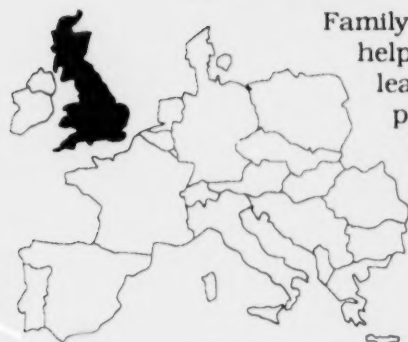
Debra Brin, of Regina, taught English at Instituto Quintanarroense de la Cultura in 1985-86. She is a member of the Saskatchewan International Labour Program and recently toured Mexico to discuss the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and related structural adjustment policies with Mexican workers, women's groups, community groups and environmentalists. Debra reports that structural adjustment programs have meant cuts to education and it's becoming more difficult for poor Mexican families to keep their children in school. The economic changes have pushed over half of Mexico's population below the poverty lines, she says. Families have always had difficulties ensuring that their children had access to post-secondary education but now children are even dropping out of primary school to help support the family.



Literacy drive puts accent on family

By Donald MacLeod, Education Correspondent

Reprinted from The Manchester Guardian, June 16, 1993



Family literacy projects to help parents and children learn together are being promoted by the government in an effort to tackle the problem of Britain's six million functionally illiterate adults.

John Patten, the education secretary, yesterday announced a £250,000 grant for "teach the mother, reach the child" pilot projects to be set up by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit.

A close link between reading, writing and numeracy problems and family backgrounds has been demonstrated by the unit's research into a sample of people born in 1970. It found that more than 60 percent of young people with parents who were unskilled and had no qualifications had low literacy scores themselves. More than half of this group had low numeracy scores.

Mr. Patten told the unit's annual conference that family literacy schemes would have a "double bonus" of helping parents and children in tandem.

He spoke warmly of visiting a north London primary school where the governors decided to tackle reading problems among the children by inviting mothers into the school on an informal basis at the end of the school day.

"It was done with great sensitivity. No one felt ashamed. Children have a parental role model to follow and parents have an incentive to learn because of their children," Mr. Patten said.

Earlier, the Princess Royal, patron of the unit, said "The family link is possibly the most important stepping stone for encouraging people to increase their basic skills, gain confidence and perhaps take on a course and maybe even go to college. For many the mention of the word course or college would have frightened them away completely."

According to the unit, more than half of the young adults surveyed had numeracy levels below those expected of 11-year-olds under the national curriculum. One in seven had real difficulties with reading, writing and spelling, while one in five was struggling with everyday mathematics.

This was unacceptable in the late 20th century, Mr. Patten said. "The problem has been brushed under the carpet for decades."

The survey asked people questions on advertisements and instructions. All but a few were able to say where a pop concert was being held after looking at a poster, but a third failed to answer correctly a question about warming somebody with hypothermia.



Asked to add up the cost of four items of shopping and to hand over the correct number of £1 coins, 40 percent of the sample got it wrong. This figure rose to 76 percent on a question about buying a car on hire purchase. The adults were asked to work out a 10 percent deposit for a £4,900 car and then calculate the monthly payments over three years.

The unit believes that very few people in Britain are illiterate in the old sense but a significant minority have serious difficulties with the basic skills of literacy. A much larger group are finding that rising demands at work and for qualifications are outstripping their basic skills.

A survey of school learners entering further education in England and Wales found 40 percent would need help with basic skills to get a standard vocational qualification.

Mr. Patten said that the government's national curriculum would take a number of years to improve standards of literacy in schools. He added that the situation had not been helped by the boycott of tests for 14- and seven-year-olds by teachers in England and Wales.

Training for Empowerment

- A kit of materials for training frontline workers in the fields of literacy, cooperative, community and labour education
- Offers a hands-on introduction to popular education
- Contains a User's Guide, three Background Papers, nine Activities and Tools and a section of Resources
- Based on a South-South exchange that linked Mozambican literacy workers with popular educators in Nicaragua and Brazil
- Written by Judith Marshall with Domingos Chigarire, Helena Francisco, Antonio Goncalves and Leonardo Nhantumbo



Published by the National Directorate of Adult Education, Mozambique, International Council for Adult Education and Doris Marshall Institute for Education and Action.

Training for Empowerment is available in English, French and Portuguese and can be ordered from the Doris Marshall Institute, 64 Charles Street E., Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1T1. Telephone: (416) 964-8500, Fax: (416) 964-0693.

The cost is \$9 each plus 20% shipping and handling plus 7% GST (Total \$11.56)

NETWORK NEWS

Project Update

Computer Database — Summer student Irene Smith is cataloguing Network resources and entering them into a database. Initially a print copy of this resource list will be sent to members. Eventually, we hope to make this information available on-line. We also hope to compile a list of literacy videos for practitioners.

The Network board will decide in September whether the Network has sufficient funds to serve as the regional centre for the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD).



Superior Propane literacy fund-raiser, Prince Albert, May 15. Rick Theale of Superior thanks Sandy Anderson, literacy instructor at SIAST Woodland, for cooking at the fundraiser.



Family Literacy — Come Read With Me

Pat Hoffman and Norma Klassen have adapted the Homespun manual for use in Saskatchewan. Training dates are August 25 to 27 (Regina) and September 15 to 17 (Saskatoon). Further training will be scheduled if there is demand. Training is planned for the Teen Parent Program run by the Department of Social Services.

Our Thanks to:

- community schools in Saskatoon for the name
- Family Literacy Interest Group of Ontario for logo idea
- The Star Phoenix for the logo art work
- Soroptomists International-Saskatoon for \$3,000 which will pay for the Saskatoon training
- Bonnie Annicchiarico of Brooks Campus, Medicine Hat College for the concept.

1993-94 Project Funding

We have received verbal approval of our funding from the National Literacy Secretariat. Network project activities will include more work in the computer database area, interagency cooperation and family literacy.

On Our Way

The good news: the Saskatchewan Library Association has received \$9,600 in Special Project funds for publication of the paper.

The bad news: the Network board has decided that it can no longer continue publishing the paper with such uncertain funding.

The Network is trying to find an organization to take over responsibility for staffing the paper for the 1993-94 year. Saskatchewan Health and the Saskatchewan Dietetics Association want to publish a special nutrition issue of the paper in September, 1993.

The following partners now support the paper:

- *Regina Leader Post* — printing
- SIAST Wascana — mailing
- Literacy Network — subscriptions and mailing labels
- Saskatchewan Library Association — financial support

Evaluation Results

Lisa Talvak submitted her report on the Network to the board and staff on May 27 and 28. The report has many ideas on how the Network can better serve the literacy community. The report also showed that there is general satisfaction with our services but we need to:

- find better ways of informing people about Network activities.
- clarify the role of the Network in relation to the literacy community.

The full report may be ordered for \$5 plus postage.

The board and staff spent two days discussing the results of the evaluation and how to implement the suggestions. A number of recommendations were made.



Arliss Dellow (left) accepting cheque for \$600 from Canada Post representative Sid Tyson. The money will be used to print the Network's monthly flyer.

A. Board Structure

The board is asking the membership to reexamine the role of Representative Directors on the board. Some board members think that the board's main role is the operation of the Network; others think that the board also serves as a place to share information.

Members are asked to choose between the following options:

OPTION 1 — 9 Elected Directors + up to 8 Representative Directors

Quorum: 5 elected, 2 representative (current structure)

OPTION 2 — 9 Elected + up to 8 Appointed Directors

Quorum: 5 elected; Representative Directors to participate in all discussion; financial votes restricted to elected directors.

OPTION 3 — 9 Elected Directors + up to 2 Appointed directors

Quorum: 5 elected.

Please be prepared to vote on this important issue at the Network's Annual General Meeting on October 16.

SLN board nominations: six positions are open on the Network Board; if you are interested in running for election contact the Nominating Committee c/o the Network office.

B. Publications

Literacy Works and *What's News* will provide more information about the Network and its activities on a regular basis. Watch for a number of other specific changes in each publication.

C. Membership Fees

The board has decided on a slight increase in membership fees and an extra fee for borrowing privileges (see form in this issue).

Literacy Program Committee

The board approved the following Terms of Reference at its June meeting.

The purpose of the committee is to: encourage the development of new literacy initiatives; provide a forum for discussion of literacy needs and programs; provide a mechanism for the establishment of criteria for the allocation of literacy funding; promote collaboration in literacy program planning and delivery; and serve in an advisory capacity to the Network.

The committee will be chaired by a Network board member or designate and

will be comprised of one representative from each of the following regions: Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Northern, East Central, West Central, South West and South East and one representative each from Saskatchewan Education and Multiculturalism and Citizenship. Task forces will be established on specific issues as the need arises.

A special meeting has been called to address outstanding concerns.

2 - 4 p.m.

Tuesday, September 28, 1993

Room 104, SIAST Kelsey, Saskatoon

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation

The Foundation will meet on September 1 to allocate grants.

In response to enquiries about the Foundation and its members, the Foundation was formed in 1989 as a nonprofit organization to raise money for literacy in Saskatchewan. Initial seed funding was provided by the National Literacy Secretariat. Since then the Foundation's main fund-raising activity has been the Literacy Award of Merit Dinner and the Gowski Golf Tournament.

The members are: Dennis Ball, chairperson, Joan Berntson, Bill Clarke, Murray Hunter, Lester Lafond, Ray Meiklejohn, Ted Renner, Robin Stonehouse and Nayda Veeman.

Security Screening of Volunteers

Thanks to a request by MP Ron Fisher on behalf of Project Ready, the RCMP has agreed to exempt volunteers from the \$25 fee for security screening. This is good news for agencies which rely on volunteers but have limited funds.

Literacy Award of Merit Dinner and Gowski Golf Tournament

This year's committee, under the leadership of Ray Meiklejohn, did a great job. It was the first year the Network played a significant role in the organization of these two events.

As of July, it is estimated that \$45,000 was raised and committee members have a number of recommendations for an even better event in Regina in 1994.

Literacy and the Federal Election

The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) is developing a Literacy Issues Kit for use during the federal election campaign. One idea is that a "Literacy Watchdog" be identified in each constituency to attend political rallies and meetings. The "Watchdog" would ask questions about literacy and monitor candidates' responses.

MCL has moved its office to 458 MacLaren Street, 2nd Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 5K7. Telephone: (613) 563-2464; fax: (613) 563-2504.

SASKATCHEWAN LITERACY NETWORK

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FEES

Learner/student	\$15
General Membership	\$30
Institutional Membership	\$50
Subscription only (out of province subscribers)	\$30**

INCLUDES

10 issues of *What's News*

4 Issues *Literacy Works*

1 voting privilege

**Those with subscriptions only do not
have voting and/or borrowing privileges.

MEMBERSHIPS WITH BORROWING PRIVILEGES*

(up to 12 items per year)

Learner/Student	\$25
General Membership	\$50
Institutional Membership	\$75

*A catalogue of Network Resources will be forwarded
to those who pay for borrowing privileges.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION REQUEST FORM

Name _____ Occupation _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Employer/School _____

Please indicate type of membership:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Learner/Student — \$15 | ☐ Borrowing Privilege — \$10 |
| ☐ General Membership — \$30 | ☐ Borrowing Privilege — \$20 |
| ☐ Institutional Membership — \$50 | ☐ Borrowing Privilege — \$25 |
| ☐ Subscription Only — \$30 | |

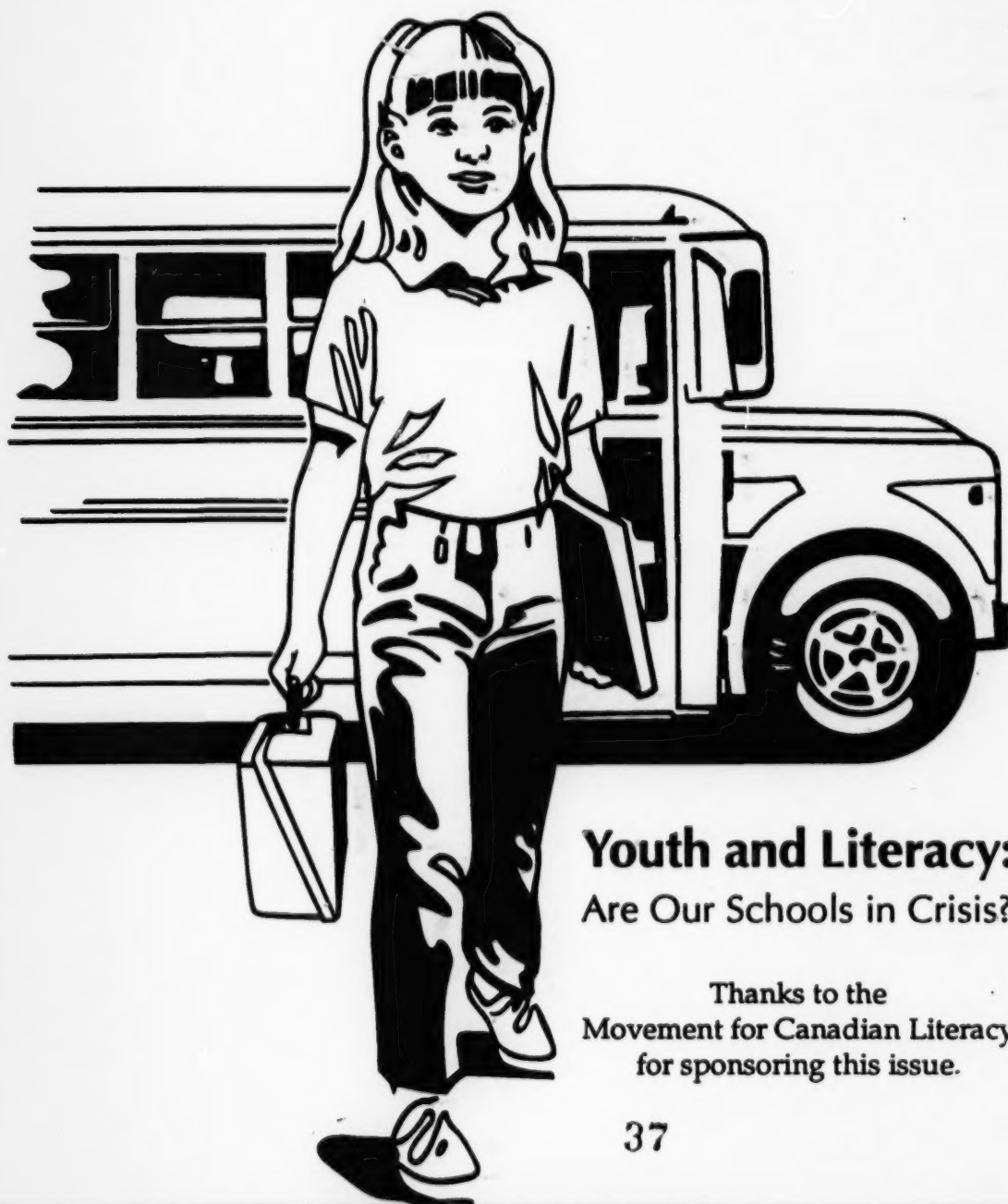
MAIL WITH YOUR COMPLETED CHEQUE OR MONEY ORDER TO

Saskatchewan Literacy Network
P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5

LITERACY

WORKS

Vol. 5, No. 2 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network Winter 1993-94



Youth and Literacy: Are Our Schools in Crisis?

Thanks to the
Movement for Canadian Literacy
for sponsoring this issue.

37

Price: \$5.00 for non-members (includes tax)

Editorial Committee this issue

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Ron Torgerson

***Literacy Works* Editor**

Liz Ormiston

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Don Sayers, Joanne McDonald, Ingrid Gabert,
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THANKS MCL!

Thanks so much to the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) for their sponsorship of this issue of *Literacy Works*. The Network also wishes to commend MCL for a national survey it has initiated on children and literacy. Collaborating on the longitudinal survey are the Canadian Teachers Federation, the Canadian School Boards Association and the Council of Ministers of Education.

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236.

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LITERACY NEWS

Moving south

Robin Stonehouse, well known as a literacy instructor and former president of the Movement for Canadian Literacy, has moved recently from Saskatoon to Regina. Robin's wife, Lily, has been appointed Assistant Deputy Minister of Advanced Education. Robin's move is a real loss for the Saskatoon literacy community. Congratulations to Lily and best wishes to the Stonehouse family in their new home.

Older adult literacy project

The Seniors' Education Centre in Regina has begun an Older

Adult Literacy Project which is intended to begin to respond to older adult learning needs and gaps in current provincial literacy programs and related resources. The goals of the project are to: raise awareness of seniors' literacy needs and resources and provide older adult literacy training and resources.

Four program components will be pursued: the development of an annotated bibliography on older adult literacy; the development of a seniors' literacy tutor training manual which will include an audio-visual resource; consultation with literacy program coordinators and tutors, older adults and others; and two

workshops intended to raise sensitivity to the special needs of older adult literacy learners.

The project will operate from September 1993 to September 1994. For more information please contact Darla Goettler at the Seniors' Education Centre, University of Regina Extension, telephone 779-4706.

Family literacy conference

By Donna Banks

I attended the Family Literacy Interest Group of Ontario (FLIG) Conference in May, 1993. The theme of the conference was *Learning From Each Other*. Convinced that I would be doing the "learning" with the "from each other"

part left to other participants. I set out to discover more about family literacy. I

registered in the session, "What is Family Literacy?" FLIG defines family literacy as "... a community-based initiative designed to break the cycle of illiteracy. Family in this context is interpreted in the broadest sense of the term. Implicit in this process is a shared responsibility in the community to provide intergenerational support, education and advocacy. The intention is to empower the individual and establish reading as a valued activity shared within the family."

This information set the stage for discussion on how to plan and implement family literacy activities.

After listening to keynote speaker, Dr. Ruth Nickse, and interacting with fellow participants, I discovered several things. First, programs must be built on the needs of the participants. Good programs must have the support of the community and successful programs result when the two form a partnership. Was this concept new to me? No, my teacher training and experience had taught me this lesson. I was, however, reminded that all successful literacy programs — within and apart from the regular K-12 system — recognize the participants as the most important resource.

Donna Banks is Literacy Partnerships Coordinator at Cypress Hills Regional College.

Washington symposium

By Heather Hufton (Co-Chair, Ontario Literacy Coalition)

Reprinted from Literacy on the Move

On September 10, the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. sponsored an International Literacy Symposium called *The Literacy Challenge*. The chair of every provincial and territorial coalition was invited.

There were many reasons I did not come back full of optimism. First, it is the provincial and state governments that control education in both



Canada and the US, yet there were no provincial or state representatives on the panel discussion on the role of government in literacy. Even though the Canadian and US governments made a commitment to improve literacy, it will be the provinces and states that play the lead role in literacy and we needed to hear from them.



Second, much of the day's discussion centred on the need for improved services for those with relatively high literacy skills who now must cope with technological training or job retraining. Little was said about the needs of the basic learner and there was no mention of the fact that there are long waiting lists for most literacy services.

Third, eliminating the literacy problem by the year 2000 was still seen as a realistic goal. This statement shows a lack of understanding of the problem, yet it was given by Madeleine Kunin, Deputy Secretary for the US Department of Education.

It was not said out loud but I got the impression that funding for the "nearly" literate is seen as the fastest and most efficient way of reducing the illiteracy

statistics and increasing our competitiveness in the workplace. I see basic learners being pushed out of the literacy discussions. I think we will need to lobby hard to make sure their needs stay at the top of the literacy agenda.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network chose not to send a representative to this symposium because of the cost. All other provinces and territories, except the Northwest Territories, attended.

Students for literacy

Frontier College: Students for literacy is a new national initiative that will set up student-run literacy programs on university and college campuses across Canada. Students are being challenged to participate in and effectively create a national student movement for literacy. By doing so, they will:

- Increase literacy access for non-readers in Canada by serving as literacy tutors/facilitators;
- Increase literacy awareness in Canada;
- Bridge the gap between the university/college and the community by doing community service;
- Open their eyes to social issues and the experience of learners in Canada;
- Raise funds for community literacy work.

Where do community literacy organizations and provincial coalitions come into the picture? How can they help?

Each campus program is required to establish strong links with community organizations. They will want to know how they can help existing community organizations. They will ask to come to your organizations to meet you, to familiarize themselves with your work, and to offer their help. They can provide you with literacy volunteers from the campus, or they can hold a fundraising activity in aid of your program. There are many ways in which they can help and they would like to find out how. They are looking for support and encouragement.

How can I find out more about this program?

Contact:

Stephanie Miller
Program Director
Frontier College
35 Jackes Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 1E2
Telephone: (416) 923-3591
Fax: (416) 923-3522





UNMASK THE
LITERACY CRISIS

Moving forward to basics

By Linda Shohet

Some facts and comments:

- **Fact:** Fewer than 50 percent of Canadians completed high school in 1950.

Comment: We did not talk about a 50 percent dropout rate in 1950.

- **Fact:** According to the 1990 StatsCan survey of literacy skills, the lowest levels of literacy in Canada are among those aged 54+.

Comment: These people went to school in the "good old days" of the Three Rs when grammar drill was part of the daily round and weekly compositions were required in most schools.

So why in the 1990s do we use statistics on dropout and literacy as the evidence to support the claim that Canada is in the midst of a literacy crisis and that our schools have failed?

I am always a little astonished at the zeal of those who blame the current school system for the literacy problems which have been identified in most of the industrialized world over the past decade. Whole language is a favourite object of attack; a return to grammar drill and phonics is a frequently-proposed remedy, popularly known as part of "the basics."

I want to examine some of the assumptions behind back-to-basics and their connection to literacy and to schooling in general. I also want to offer an alternative which I will call "forward to basics." By separating some of the positive strands of back-to-basics from their right-wing framework and connecting them to what we know about learning, we can imagine a future education different from the backward-looking one being proposed by the discontented.

Under the "back-to-basics" banner sit a range of groups with very different concerns and sometimes opposed agendas; they are united in their dissatisfaction with the current state of public education. But they are mistaken in their analysis of the problem and in their proposed solutions.

First, the movement is driven heavily by nostalgia for a purely fictional "good old days" of education when families read around the fire, talked over dinner, when everyone learned easily, wrote well, spoke eloquently and respected schools.

Although Canada has not maintained the kinds of elaborate educational testing programs that the United States has, Canadian statistics, where available suggest this vision is a dream. Anyone who has worked with adult literacy students can verify that many have memories of school as a place of humiliation and failure, where no one recognized learning differences or disabilities and where dropping out was the only alternative. In many small communities, cultural differences were a shame and schools were sites of forced assimilation. In short, the wonderful school days of "John Brown," Canadian-style are largely a myth.

Schools did what they were supposed to do. They taught those students who could follow the prescribed program the basics of reading, writing and math and prepared them for work as moral, law-abiding citizens and members of a community. These were not small demands, but they were clear.

The nature of the schooling enterprise was such that, until the 1940s, the weakest or least-able learners probably left by the end of elementary school. Economic necessity drove out still more who had to contribute to the survival of family. Those who remained were capable

and committed. They represented about 50 percent of the possible student population. If you gave most teachers today that same group of students to teach according the same learning objectives there would be no perception of schools having failed.

Since World War II, we raised the expectations of both levels of schooling and numbers schooled. If a Grade 9 education was sufficient for most jobs 40 years ago, today we ask for a minimum of Grade 12. We expect everyone to graduate, an objective never before demanded in any country on earth. We also expect schools to provide services and counselling that were previously provided by family, church or community. What we are seeing is that schools cannot meet all of the expectations that have been foisted on them.

The questions remain. Do we have a literacy crisis? Are the schools responsible? Will a return to the basics address the problem?

The answers are no, we do not have a crisis, and using the language of crisis distorts the nature of the problem. But yes, we do have a problem.

No, schools are not directly responsible for the large number of older Canadians who cannot meet new demands. The demands were changed long after these people left school. But yes, schools have some responsibility for the large number of young people who are leaving high school with devalued certificates. In an effort to push through as many students as possible, schools have seriously lowered expectations across systems.

No, a return to a simplistic notion of reading, writing and math without accompanying integration of learning across the curriculum and intensive

teacher training and upgrading that supports teachers in their work will not answer the need. But, if the idea of "basics" is rethought and the "Rs" expanded to include relating, reconceiving and recognition, then we have some hope.

Relating means that the high school curriculum has to be reconceived so that subjects are related to one another and made relevant to students' lives. Reading, writing and math cannot be "drilled" in isolation; they have to be integrated into every segment students do — they must be necessary to succeed in every subject.

Literacy has to be reconceived as part of the way we live and learn in every context of our lives — our communications in families, communities, workplaces — and not simply the functional tasks to get school grades. It also has to be expanded beyond the idea of print to include media and new electronic technologies, the fastest growing means of conveying and accessing information and knowledge.

Recognition has to come in the form of allowing that everyone cannot learn in the same way. It is no accident that "alternative" schools are proliferating. These are the acknowledgement that single systems cannot work for all. Recognition means that many learners will never become entrepreneurial, economically contributing members of our society and that we must accept these individuals where they are and provide the supports, financial and structural, to give them a chance to live as dignified citizens of this country regardless of their literacy levels.

Linda Shohet is director of the Centre for Literacy in Montreal, and editor of the newsletter Across the Curriculum.

Employers and employees must team up on training needs

By Don Sayers

A few years back, Alvin Toffler said the illiterate of the 80s and beyond wouldn't be those who couldn't read and write, but would rather be those who couldn't learn, unlearn and relearn new skills. When we look at our emerging workforce in Canada, some would argue that we have a significantly illiterate population of young workers.

A modern definition of literacy goes beyond simply reading and writing skills, as vital as they are. In the emerging workplace, employers need employees who are motivated and equipped to be fully contributing partners with the goals of the employer. That requires a positive motivational environment, which is almost entirely in the hands of the management of the enterprise. It also requires people with competence in a number of specific skill areas. The person who is occupationally literate is competent in:

- reading and writing at the Grade 12 level,
- mathematics, including basic algebra and numeracy,
- problem solving conceptual skills,
- communications skills (structured, active listening and speaking versus talking and hearing), and
- basic computer literacy.

This model of literacy is much broader than simply reading and writing. For the emerging workplace, it is a model of baseline occupational competencies. That raises the question of where young people today are going to acquire these critical skills.

Rather than focus on any shortcomings of existing institutions, we need to concentrate instead on what will produce competent, skilled people who can become fully contributing partners with the goals of the employer. It's clear in many cases that a Grade 12 diploma does not mean Grade 12 skills. Given that existing systems aren't meeting that need, what must we collectively do to provide for a useful and competent workforce that is equal to the employment challenges of today and tomorrow? One answer may be a partnership, giving all stakeholders a role in determining training needs, and in delivering effective programs.

In order for any partnership to work, the stakeholders must recognize some principles in order to ensure mutual accountability, effort and benefit. First, the problem is complex, and defies any quick fix. Second, if employers are going to have a literate workforce, they're going to have to take aggressive action now to realize those needs. No amount of finger pointing is going to change the level of skills that workers have today. Finally, employers have the right and the opportunity to demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit in equipping their own human resources. Modern training systems are much more effective than previous systems, and will yield high returns when

used properly. Basically, a modern training system includes:

- a clear corporate plan outlining corporate goals, values and direction,
- a training needs analysis system, which identifies shortfalls in skills and/or knowledge which limit the worker's capacity to be a fully contributing partner,
- the establishment of clear learning goals, based on an objective training needs analysis,
- progressive training delivery options which utilize time-sharing concepts and other-than-traditional classroom methods (mentoring, self-directed learning, accelerated learning techniques) and
- training evaluation systems which measure learning goal achievement, learning transfer to the job and training relevance.

Fortunately, many employers today recognize the need to review their training investment and are implementing modern systems. As for employers who continue to moan about the lack of skilled workers without taking action, one can only wonder whether they'll be around at all in a few short years. How can one survive without employees who are fully contributing partners with the goals of the employer? Who is better equipped than the employer to ensure that employees have the necessary literacy skills to be fully contributing partners? A training partnership involving both employers and employees will be a common theme in prosperous enterprises from now on.



Don Sayers of Regina has more than 20 years experience in adult non-formal education. His particular interest is in designing corporate training systems sensitive to cultural needs and resource availability.

Give responsibility for learning back to students

By Joanne McDonald

Many of the students in my first-year university mathematics classes have very recently graduated from high school. Among them, I see far too many who cannot read well enough to do the independent learning needed to be successful in their first-year courses. Since they cannot read well, they are not able to write well either. There is a widespread belief that writing is not required in mathematics. However, there is probably no other discipline in which it is so critically important to say precisely what you mean, and to say it clearly. Many students are convinced that passively watching someone else go through the steps of a solution is all they need to do to learn new concepts and methods. They have confused familiarity with understanding and knowledge. Recognition of an object as something they have previously seen is misinterpreted as knowing what the object means and how to use it correctly. The lack of necessary reading and writing skills is accompanied by a blind faith in the infallibility of the calculator. Their ability to judge the reasonableness of an answer is seriously impaired, since the fact that the calculator has displayed some numbers is enough to convince them that its answer must be correct.

How does such a situation develop? Perhaps there aren't any simple answers, but I think I can identify some of the reasons.

First, television has played a large part in the lives of young people. They have spent a great number of hours watching TV and seem to confuse the passive watching of a screen with the learning of the information it presents. The belief that learning takes place through simply observing what is happening is easily

shown to be unfounded if you try to recall the details of a television program you watched several months ago. There will be very little retention of content.

Second, in recent years there has been much importance placed on physical training and muscle development. There has not been a corresponding emphasis on mental training. Mental muscles need exercise and discipline at least as much as physical ones.

Third, the teacher often takes on too much of the responsibility for the learning. No teacher, no matter how gifted, can do the learning for the student. We must give back to the learner the responsibility for doing the learning. I believe that not enough has been expected of our students. For too long we have laboured under the delusion that the teacher, by jumping through enough of the right hoops, will magically "make the student learn better." One unfortunate legacy of this belief is that many students in high school realize neither the importance of obtaining a solid grounding in the basics, nor what they need to do to acquire that base. Indeed, how can they even have any respect for learning when current educational policy not only *allows* them to pass to the next grade level without mastering the content of the present one, but actually regulates *against* their being held back for more than one repetition of a particular grade level? We often hear the proud boast that our current policy keeps many students in school who would otherwise have dropped out before graduating from Grade 12. But is keeping students in school under these conditions any cause for exultation? Surely there is small value in keeping a body confined to a classroom when the associated mind is mainly

occupied with absorbing as little information as possible.

Fourth, some young people may have little facility with reading for comprehension because reading was not encouraged in their homes, or because there was a lack of interesting and challenging materials to read.

I do not suggest that the four reasons given above are the only ones, or even necessarily the main reasons so many of our incoming students have inadequate reading skills. But whatever the reasons may be, it is crucial that we find remedies.

I am convinced that more required writing in the school curriculum would result in improving the level of competency in both reading and writing. If our elementary and secondary students were required to read articles or books and summarize their content *in a style of writing which meets high standards of literacy*, that would go far towards improving their reading and writing skills. We would be doing ourselves a favour as a society by requiring that our students write well, and that they do so from the early years of school. Writing well does not demand the writing style of a literary giant. Good writing is simply a style that uses the ordinary words of our language in a straightforward and grammatically correct way.

There is a need to reinstate some form of uniform examinations, but not just at the high school leaving stage. There should be some procedure established for testing the level of knowledge at various points through the elementary and high school years. As it is now, the marks our incoming students have been awarded in their high school final exams do not reliably indicate their level of competence. The readiness of students for university

bears little relation to the marks they have on their high school transcripts. But what is worse is that two students from different schools who have the same grades may have wildly differing levels of preparation. There is no way of determining just what the knowledge base is of individual students before they are locked into a program which may be either far beyond their capabilities or not sufficiently challenging for them.

I understand that among teachers in the system there is great resistance to the idea of uniform high school leaving exams. I have never been able to determine exactly what their objection is. The argument that common exams would infringe on the autonomy of the teachers in the various schools is a misplaced concern. Surely it is the students' right to know how they measure up to their counterparts in other schools — at least in this province, if not throughout the nation. To insist that teachers should have the right to set their own individual standards ignores entirely the well-being of their students. Why should it be more important for a teacher to exercise his or her own standards than it is to ensure that students get a level of education that will prepare them for life after high school?

Simply keeping children in school, without emphasizing that they must reach a specified level of competency is not only an exercise in futility; it cheats all of us by depriving society of a properly trained future workforce.

Joanne McDonald (New Brunswick Teachers' College; Bachelor of Science Mount Allison University; Masters of Science McMaster University), has taught for 37 years at all levels from elementary school to university. Since 1966, she has been teaching mathematics at the University of Regina.

Whole language allows for variety of learning styles

By Ingrid Gabert

Young children learn to read and write in much the same way as they learn to talk. Since language development is dependent on experiences and interactions, the parents' role as the child's first teacher is a very important one.

Regardless of the language spoken at home, the more time spent answering questions, reading stories and talking with children, the more advantaged they will be when they start school. Most language activities are oral in the early years, but many young children recognize signs and symbols in their environment. Few of us are able to drive past McDonalds with anyone over the age of three in the car without a request for a hamburger!

The child's name and those of family members usually are the first words he or she wants to read or write. Pets and favourite objects around the house are also great motivators. However, the thing that interests children the most is seeing others around them reading and writing. They are great imitators and we need to model for them. This holds true for handling and turning the pages of a book and following the words from left to right/top to bottom as well as making the first attempts at writing by scribbling with a crayon or drawing a picture.

The key to success is starting when the child is ready. It's usually easy for a parent to read a story to one child or several children and talk with them as they ask about the letters and words, trying to create meaning. Parents can also write down the words the children are asking about and provide time and materials

when they want to draw or write. Many children seem to teach themselves to read or write before they start school, while others show no interest and seem to avoid getting started.

Once children start school, the classroom teacher will build on the language experiences displayed by each child. At one time, it was common for all children to receive the same instruction and experiences regardless of their interests or abilities. Today, it is more common to start where the child is. This means the teacher has to spend the first few weeks getting to know each child and assessing his or her skills. Then he or she builds on those skills. "Whole language" is one way of looking at children and how they learn. It also means being actively involved in learning.

Having children dictate their stories gives them a chance to use oral language meaningfully as they move from labelling to storytelling. The story is then read back while the child follows the text and the teacher points to the individual words. At this point the teacher may emphasize the beginning sound of each word. Before children are expected to read new words on their own, the teacher will introduce the words in the context of a story, song or rhyme. After hearing the story, children are invited to share it by repeating the sentences together.

The teacher will track the print across the page and may even leave out words which the children fill in orally along the way. They eventually match the words using a variety of clues such as word length and beginning/ending sounds.

In a completely phonetic approach, children learn the alphabet and then the corresponding sounds for each letter name. The most common sounds of the consonants are taught first. Vowels are usually introduced, one at a time, by their short sound. These bits of information are then pieced together to make up simple c/v/c/ words. This means that children will learn to blend the sounds of three letter words using common consonant sounds before and after a newly learned vowel (c-a-t = cat). Once a basic vocabulary has been introduced, the children will learn a number of connecting words that may be used to build sentences.

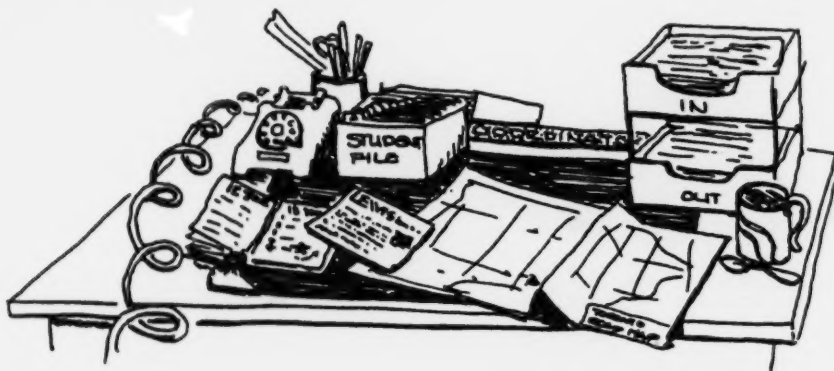
Since the English language is filled with "exceptions to the rule," many words cannot be sounded out and are introduced as "sight" vocabulary (the, look, these). To avoid frustration, the beginning readers usually memorize these words until they're introduced to new phonetic skills that help them decode the information for themselves. Once the short vowels have been mastered, the long vowels are introduced, along with a variety of verses such

as "when two vowels go walking the first does the talking and says its own name."

Phonetic skills also play an important role in a whole language approach but are emphasized differently. Whole language refers to a holistic way of learning. It means looking at the complete picture and then its parts. A teacher using this approach will also usually integrate, or connect, other areas of the curriculum to reading and writing. The students might study cats as part of a science unit on animals. They could look for information on cats, bring a pet cat to school, hear stories and draw pictures of cats. When they start to read and write about cats on their own, they'll be able to draw on this background knowledge.

The children will have seen the word "cat" many times before they have to read or write it. The teacher might set up a display about cats and draw the childrens' attention to the title. This is when they would learn/use phonetic skills. The

continued . . .



Whole language allows for variety of learning styles *continued*

beginning letter could be identified and its sound introduced. The children might look for other words that begin with 'c' or end with 't' or they might circle all the words that have a short 'a' sound like "cat" in their story dictations. Vocabulary is built by brainstorming ideas about cats.

Vocabulary is usually more extensive in a holistic approach because it comes from related experiences. This also means the sentences attempted by these beginning writers may be more natural and familiar because they use the ideas developed in science or social studies rather than a limited number of known letters and sounds.

Ideas are initially more important than spelling. Once the students record their main ideas in a first draft, the teacher will edit the work for spelling, sentence structure and sequence of events. No one method works the same way for everyone. It is therefore extremely important to find

out what each child needs at a given stage in his or her move towards literacy.

Some children are visual learners. They need to see the vocabulary and use/copy the words. Others need to hear words and work on how they sound. The language experiences introduced in the early years are critical but children need to remain actively involved in their learning through all the school years. Teaching is a challenging profession because there are so many ways to learn. It is the job of teachers (and parents) to find what works best in each situation and to adjust instruction accordingly.

Ingrid Gabert of Saskatoon has 13 years experience teaching kindergarten and Grade One. She has also worked as educational consultant for elementary instruction and is currently a teaching vice-principal and Grade 3-4 teacher. She is working on her Masters in Education and her thesis research is in the area of emerging literacy.

Literacy Works Deadlines

Spring '94: Literacy Programs within the Justice System
(Deadline: January 31)

Summer '94: Francophone and Other Minority Language Literacy
(Deadline: March 31)

Using publishing to bring meaning back to the writing process

By Rory O'Hagan



A few years ago, when I began teaching English at Robert Usher High School, I noticed something disturbing about my students' writing, something that would eventually change the way I taught. My concern had less to do with my students' lack of technical expertise than it had to do with their view of the writing process, their perception of what writing was for. When I asked them to write, they responded with the three H's of high school homework: How long does it have to be? How many marks is it worth? And how long do we have to do it? Then they would reluctantly begin to write, scratching away at the foolscap and stopping as soon as they had completed the required number of pages. Writing for my students had become a mechanical activity, devoid of any serious attempt to communicate something meaningful to a real audience. My students knew that writing was an artificial activity, and I quickly realized that I was part of the problem. After all, my students were writing for an audience

of one, and that audience knew what he wanted to hear before the students even put pen to paper. I chose the topic; I chose the form; I chose the audience. My students were far from stupid. Why work hard at telling me things I already knew? No wonder their writing lacked logic and coherence; no wonder they didn't want to revise; no wonder they were sloppy editors. When I questioned the logic of my students' papers a familiar refrain spoke volumes to me. "Well, you know what I mean anyway," they would say. In an effort to return meaning and a sense of audience to the process of composition, my students and I began Robert Usher's publishing program.

The program began in 1991 with the launching of *Strive*, a literary and visual arts magazine published by the Grade 11 Creative Writing Class. The following year we offered a Grade 12 Journalism Class, which published *Beyond Limits*, a community news and human interest magazine. And, most recently, a Grade 10 class has taken responsibility for publishing the school newspaper.

There are several important principles which guide our publishing program. The first of these has to do with student ownership and responsibility. It has been my experience that students learn best when they are actively involved in the process, when they have a stake in their learning. From the outset, the publishing program has been organized and driven

continued . . .

Using publishing to bring meaning back to the writing process *continued*

by the students. They have chosen the formats of the magazines. They have edited and arranged the submissions. They have contributed the artwork and photography. They have sold the magazines and balanced the books. And, most important, they have written the poems and stories. To write well, one must be able to make effective decisions and to think clearly, creatively and logically. In publishing Usher's various magazines, students have learned that they must make important decisions about topic, form, content and audience. Most significantly, though, they have learned that they are able to make such decisions.



The publishing program also recognizes that students need time to become good writers and time to compose thoughtful pieces. Good writing has as much to do with process as it has to do with content. Students need to be introduced to strategies that will help them become better at things like topic choice, revision and editing, but they also need substantial time to experience what real writers do. In order to give students time, I had to change the way I structured my classes. Classes in the publishing program have adopted a workshop atmosphere. Each day begins with a very short discussion of strategies, techniques or problems which are of importance to the whole group. These short lessons may be connected to specific composition skills, process-related strategies, or particular approaches to different genres of writing. The students are then given the bulk of the period to work on their writing. This approach gives the student the time he or she needs to write, and it frees me up to provide more individualized instruction.

Finally, when we began the publishing program, we understood that writing is about communicating something meaningful to someone else. To write well, one must have a sense of audience. To care about revision and editing, about coherence and unity, about style and creativity, a young writer must see that writing goes beyond the student-teacher relationship. In Robert Usher's publishing program, we have tried to reach an

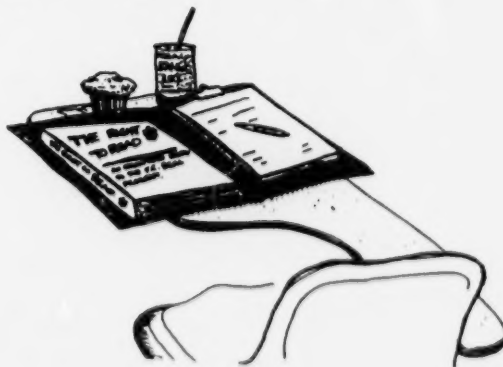
audience that goes beyond the classroom to the community of which our students are a part. Our magazines are sold in the school and in the community. In the case of the Grade 12 Journalism Class, the community functions as both audience and subject matter. Here, the students know that writing is more than a hollow academic experience. They are writing about their neighbours, and their neighbours are reading what they have written.

In these days of educational accountability, it would be impossible to write about a high school program without mentioning something about evaluation. Each student in the publishing program collects a portfolio of writing which includes all work leading up to the publishable product. The student is evaluated in areas such as the ability to choose topics and gather material, the ability to improve pieces through revision, effective editing skills and the ability to work productively and meet deadlines. In addition, the student chooses one piece at mid-term and one piece at end-term that he or she would like to be graded.

Over the past few years, Canada's schools have come under increasing public scrutiny. Parents and business groups are becoming increasingly critical of an institution they feel is no longer able to prepare young people to succeed in a changing society. Some people even suggest that we are facing an educational crisis. In response to this perceived emergency we are encouraged to "get back

to basics." The cure for our educational woes, according to some, lies in more rigorous standards, more testing, more hours in class and greater accountability of students and teachers. I happen to agree with the critics who say that we are facing an educational crisis. I agree with their diagnosis, but I disagree profoundly with their cure. Our students are constantly being tested. Almost everything they do in school is counted or measured or weighed. They are objectified and degraded: "Doug is a 67 percent; Betty is an 86 percent." Our schools are facing a crisis, but it is not a crisis of standards; it is a crisis of meaning. If we want our young people to be literate, to think critically and communicate their vision for a better world, then we must bring meaningful communication back to the writing process.

Rory O'Hagan teaches English at Robert Usher Collegiate in Regina.





Getting up to the bored: yesterday's teaching for today's students

By Nicole Pivovar and Janeen Clark

We don't think we've ever sat through an entire film in class without noticing at least one student in the room who has fallen asleep. It's like clockwork: the teacher rolls a TV set into the room and the students roll up their jackets to form pillows. Students are bored with school — that is a fact. The questions, however, that plague today's educators are why are students bored, and how can we alleviate that problem?

There are many reasons students are bored. One of the problems is the repetitive way we are taught. Day after day we are fed the same thing. We come to class and write notes from the board, read from the textbook, and are lectured to in the same manner. We know that when we're in a class that is taught the same way every day, our minds tend to wander and we lose interest quickly.

Another reason students are bored is we have no say in the content of the curriculum. What we are going to learn is already decided for us. In most classes we don't have a choice of books to read, or units to study. We have no input into the content of the class, so the class is not going to be meaningful to us. Often the content of the curriculum does not relate to our lives. Why don't any of our classes relate to one another? If we can't connect our ideas, classes, thoughts and visions to something else, school becomes less meaningful to us. What good is an English class alone? A Social class? What does it have to do with anything else? How does our life in the class relate to the outside world? If we look at the world as being connected and related, we become a well-rounded person.

Another problem causing boredom among students is the teacher's role as a distributor of knowledge rather than a mentor. In most cases teachers tend to lead the class. If the teacher took the role of a mentor, one who guides rather than leads, perhaps more students would feel more comfortable speaking out in class and would have the courage to try new and innovative ideas.

There are many teachers who have looked at these problems and have developed methods of teaching that have succeeded in getting and keeping the students' attention in class. One of the methods that we have found to work is the involvement of the **class in group projects**. Group projects allow students to have more control in choosing content that relates, and is meaningful to, their lives.

Another method of teaching that has piqued students' curiosity is the integration and intertwining of subject areas. There are programs at our school that allow students to take control of what they are learning and by doing so learn about what is important and relevant to them. These programs also help them to connect subject areas to the community, other subject areas, and to their own lives. The only problem is there are not enough of these programs.

A man named George Santayana said, "Students are on a different plane, they belong to a generation and way of feeling their own." We are not yesterday's students, so why should we have to live with yesterday's curriculum and teaching methods?

Nicole Pivovar and Janeen Clark are students at Robert Usher High School in Regina.

New parents' group calls for accountability

By John Buddingh

Citizens for Accountability and Excellence in Education is the full name of a group of Regina people who joined together in late 1992 to address their concerns with what they see as undesirable trends in public education. The group is mostly known by the acronym "CAEE". As the name of the group implies, the members feel that all is not well with our schools. Many members have tried to work with local schools to improve the shortcomings they observed. Working alone as individuals, we have not been able to effect the changes we feel are required. We hope to be more effective and more successful as a group.

What are some of the objectives of CAEE and why were these objectives set? The first three objectives that CAEE aims to accomplish all concern the perception that our schools have become so engrossed with the processes of teaching that they have lost sight of the objective, namely, the acquisition of specific, well-defined and measurable knowledge and skills. Therefore CAEE advocates the following:

1. The knowledge and skills to be acquired in each grade be defined and communicated to parents;
2. The establishment of relevant, content-based curricula with well-defined benchmarks for each subject and each grade;
3. Regular board-wide, province-wide, nation-wide and international objective evaluations of student achievement in each subject area.

Once these objectives have been accomplished, accountability will have returned to the schools and the balance between the processes of schooling/

learning and the results that the teaching/learning processes aim to generate will be improved.

The other two stated objectives of CAEE namely:

4. Wide dissemination of information about effective instructional techniques;
5. Meaningful parental involvement in our educational system.

address the concerns many of us feel with the seemingly haphazard manner in which changes in processes are continually introduced in our schools. We feel strongly that changes in curriculum, methods of instruction, methods of critical (student) evaluation should be considered only after analysis and real discussion with families (parents) who we see as the foundation of the community. Neither students nor teachers should be subjected to unproven, experimental techniques or new teaching requirements without clear justification of positive benefits.

As a member of CAEE I have found that the one thing that more than anything else unites the members of CAEE and other groups is that they care. They care about the future of all children, the future of their province and the future of their country. Without effective schooling, that is without schools that help students to obtain the knowledge and skills required to make a positive contribution to society, the future does not look promising.

John Buddingh has lived in Canada since 1966. He has been involved in literacy and English as a Second Language, and has been employed in the computer industry. For more information on CAEE, write to Box 886, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 3B1.

School did not meet needs of learning disabled son

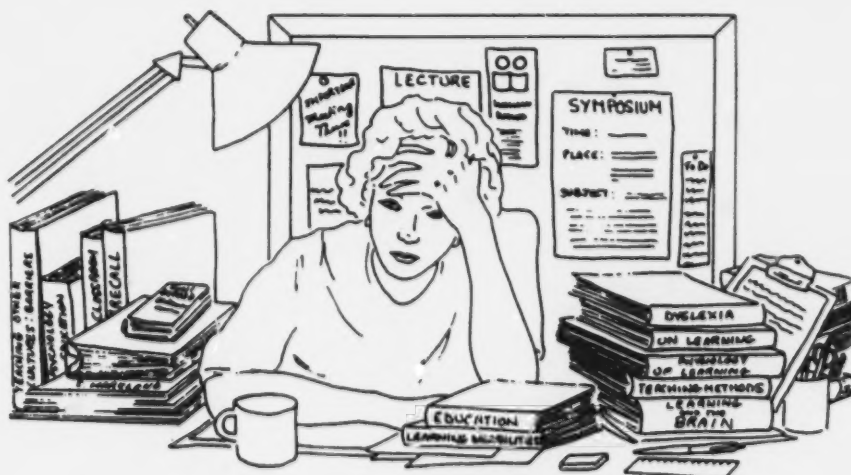
By Alan Guy

As former teachers, my wife and I assumed that our three children would enjoy their school experiences and eventually proceed to post secondary institutions of their choice. This assumption proved to be correct for our two daughters but incorrect for our son. He is now an active, intelligent young adult who is still struggling with learning disabilities that were not diagnosed and treated in the elementary schools. His experiences and ours have been horrendous but we will attempt to share them in the paragraphs that follow with the hope that they may offer some help to others.

When our son was an infant and preschooler there were no perceptions by pediatricians nor by ourselves that he would have learning experiences that would be significantly different from those of his two older sisters. On the contrary,

he occasionally surprised the rest of the family with his astonishing proposals, precocious insights and spontaneous wit. These began to diminish in his second year at school. In the early elementary grades we were told that he wasn't ready; in the later ones we were told that he had an attitude problem. Elementary school was a frustrating experience for both child and parents.

My wife, who had been an elementary teacher for 13 years, repeatedly visited the neighbourhood school to discuss our son's slow and tenuous progress, particularly in reading. Unfortunately, little was known about learning disabilities until the last two decades and the results of research have been slow to reach classroom teachers. They seemed to be as puzzled as we were and could only offer suggestions for activities that we were trying or had already tried.



Our son eventually met a resource room teacher in high school who applied a variety of reading strategies that seem to have been moderately successful. Consequently, he graduated from high school with marginal achievement scores.

Although embittered and frustrated by school experiences, he returned to high school after graduation in an attempt to upgrade and take some additional courses so that he might qualify for university entrance. While the results of that year's efforts were only partially successful, he still wanted to attend university and found one that would accept him as a conditional student. By mid-winter break, he realized that something more than effort and attitude was needed, so we arranged to have him tested for learning disabilities. The results showed that while he demonstrated that he had at least average intelligence, he was dyslexic; he may also experience some other learning disability. After mid-winter break our son went back to classes with a tape recorder (to relieve him of taking notes) and a few ideas about how he might cope. This seemed to help a little as he managed to pass most of his second semester courses but his grade point average was low. During the past year he has been at home exploring learning strategies at his own initiative and with the help of family, friends and the Learning Disabilities Society.

In spite of a long period of frustration, our son is still aiming to complete a university education and we are trying to

help him. He does some casual reading on topics of interest to him. He has become a member of the Learning Disabled Association of Saskatchewan and frequently visits the centre to seek information and borrow video cassettes on learning disabilities, which we view together and discuss afterwards. During the last year, we have searched university bookstores across Canada and found a few volumes that provide explanations and offer suggestions. After reading the books ourselves, we pass on suggestions. We have also purchased a new, more powerful computer and a printer that can produce coloured graphics. Our son finds these helpful but it requires time and practice to develop efficient word processing skills. We have also consulted professionals, attended lectures and purchased a video made by the learning disabled students at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

All of these activities seem to have helped our son but the disability remains and we are still groping our way around it. What seems to be lacking locally is any kind of workshops or extended preparatory course that offer strategies for learning disabled students who want to pursue post secondary education. Perhaps specially trained tutors who can work with students who are disabled by dyslexia, attention deficit disorder and similar disabilities can be provided.

Alan Guy is a university professor in Saskatoon.

Second and third languages can help learning disabled children

By Ingrid Paulsen



Far from being useless or even creating more problems, foreign languages can help learning disabled children in many ways. Very often learning disabled children are bright students but

they are constantly having to prove their progress in written exams. The fear of spelling mistakes haunts and hinders them as long as they go to school.

A child with spelling problems in his native language will naturally have even more difficulties in a foreign language. An English e or u, for example, has a completely different pronunciation in French. Also, there are typical French sounds that don't exist in English.

But there are many reasons why a child who has visual or auditory processing problems can benefit from a second language.

- First, a child can prove he is as clever as his peers if he wants to speak another language. A learning disabled child may not become a good tradesman, but he may excel at a job where a foreign language is needed.
- The modern world we live in has doors open wide to other countries. In mere hours, planes can now take us to parts of the world where our native language is not understood. Foreign language skills are becoming more and more indispensable.

- It's also important to remember that we mainly learn a second language to speak rather than to write. The way we speak it is far more important than knowing the spelling rules.
- Last, many learning disabled children are capable of learning a second language, even a third. But we must give them the chance and the trust they need to do so.

Parents may ask, won't this be too much for my child? Hasn't she enough to cope with in school and life already? She has. But she should be given all the chances the others have as well, for she isn't stupid. She only needs good teachers who understand her special difficulties and who give her special help. She'll learn the second language differently. Especially in the beginning, she'll need more time than the others, but she will succeed. Last, but not least, she needs a supportive family and friends who believe in her.

In spite of their learning difficulties at school, my two sons have learned to speak English, French and Spanish. They can read foreign books, enjoy foreign films and talk with people from other countries.

Ingrid Paulsen lives in Germany and has been helping learning disabled children to learn French and English for over 10 years. She was trained as an English teacher. Her interest in foreign language tutoring grew out of helping her sons. She has presented papers at learning disability conferences in Germany, France and Israel.

Reviews



Failing grades: Canadian schooling in a global economy

Author/Producer: Joe Freedman, M.D.
Copyright 1993 Society for Advancing
Educational Research
Produced by Full Court Press Inc.

Review by Donna Hudson

"Failing Grades" is a plain language review of educational research on videotape. The creator of the 76-minute tape is Joe Freedman, M.D., a concerned parent who is frustrated with Canada's current widespread educational philosophy: the child-centred/"progressive" method of instruction. Dr. Freedman organized funding for production of this video in an attempt to provide an "easy to understand" look at educational research. Using an interview format, Dr. Freedman (accompanied by a professor of educational administration) discusses a number of studies (both Canadian and American) whose outcomes support the strong performing educational system of Europe and Asia. This more disciplined "results-oriented" method of education, claims Dr. Freedman, has set the Asian and European student far ahead of the North American student. Most of the research that is reviewed is explained clearly and substantiated, with any popular criticisms/myths (Japanese student suicide, etc.) dealt with effectively. Although Dr. Freedman states that the program "is not meant to be an exercise in teacher-bashing," his and his colleague's views come across strongly in terms of their dissatisfaction with the educational leaders of this country and

the "inadequate bureaucratic and monopolistic school system that is not accountable to the public will." The tape has a serious style containing lots of information and, fortunately, is supplemented with a written summary *Failing Grades — Redirecting Canada's Educational Debate* as well as with an annotated bibliography.

Donna Hudson works on the Business Literacy Project at the Regina Public Library.

Overdue Assignment: Taking Responsibility for Canada's Schools

By Jennifer Lewington and

Graham Orpwood

Published by John Wiley & Sons, 1993

Review by Liz Ormiston

This is a clearly written study and analysis of Canada's school system. Parents, teachers, administrators and adult educators will all find it worthwhile reading. Journalist Jennifer Lewington and education professor Graham Orpwood present the perspectives of the various groups battling over our present school system: parents and students; teachers; business and community groups; government; and the education bureaucracy. If there is a villain in this drama, it is the closed education bureaucracy. The authors say the bureaucracy must give up a great deal of its power to parents and communities if our school

continued . . .

Reviews continued

system is to be a positive educational force in the future.

The authors compare our school system to an organism under stress which must learn to adapt if it is to survive. The needs of single- and two-parent working families, immigrants and refugees, a changing job market and world economy, and the increasing lack of government funds have combined to throw our education system into crisis. Perhaps the biggest danger is a national lack of consensus about what our schools are meant to achieve. The authors issue an idealistic challenge to parents and communities to begin defining what they want their schools to be and to become involved in putting that vision into action. If this does not happen, Lewington and Orpwood warn, the move towards a

fragmented and two-tiered school system will continue.

Of special interest to adult educators is the chapter entitled "Redefining School." Here, the authors discuss and give examples of how schools can become centres and resources for lifelong learning for communities.

Also of note is the chapter on the thorny issue of standardized testing, "Measuring Success." The authors come out in favour of some kind of national testing. But they state: "The public needs to be informed not only about the growing array of assessment tools but also about how they should be interpreted to improve student, school and system-wide performance in education . . . testing is only one part of a more comprehensive education restructuring package."

Saskatchewan Government

Adult Literacy and Basic Education Services (ALBES) Report

By Donna Woloshyn

Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment's restructuring in March, 1993 has resulted in a number of structural changes. Literacy programming, which was formerly located in the Adult Special Education Branch, is now a part of the *Adult Literacy and Basic Education Services* unit. The primary objective of this unit, which also has responsibility for Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and the General

Education Development (GED) Testing program, is to develop an integrated strategy to enhance delivery of these programs.

Len Kirkland has been seconded from North Battleford to manage Adult Literacy and Basic Education Services and to facilitate strategic planning for integration of programs and services under this new unit. Administration of the department's adult literacy program has been assigned

to Donna Woloshyn. Donna's other responsibilities include ABE curriculum and ESL. Darrel Hogg and George Bakay will share responsibility for the ABE and GED policy development and program administration. Ann Benesh is chief examiner for GED records and Audrey Abello is GED clerk.

Literacy will continue to remain a priority in educational programming for adults. This year, Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment provided \$763,500 for literacy programming to the department's designated literacy service-providers which include SIAST's four campuses, nine regional colleges, READ Saskatoon, Regina Public Library, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and Service Fransaskois d'Education des Adultes. In addition, the National Literacy Secretariat has provided \$450,000 in literacy grants to Saskatchewan organizations to support literacy project development and research. Projects supported included family literacy, tutor training and Aboriginal literacy initiatives.

A provincial literacy coordinators' meeting was hosted by ALBES on October 15, 1993 at Manitou Springs resort in conjunction with the annual Saskatchewan Literacy Network and SCENES conference. It is anticipated that these meetings will be held regularly two to three times per year. As a result of the October meeting, new annual reporting forms (in draft format) have been developed and sent to each coordinator. The purpose of this form is standardize the information reported to the department. Changes to the form are expected to be incorporated by June, 1994. ALBES is also in the process of developing a departmental Literacy Reference

Committee by January, 1994. The new committee will participate in decision making processes relating to federal literacy grants and will also provide direction to the unit regarding new literacy initiatives.

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, and Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment representatives were invited to attend a western Canada forum on "Workplace Literacy" held in Winnipeg on November 1 and 2. The purpose of the forum, which was hosted by the National Literacy Secretariat, was to examine workplace literacy issues and to discuss whether it would be feasible for the western provinces and territories to host a western Canada conference. No decisions were made, and a committee was struck. As departmental representative, my perception of the event is that Saskatchewan is not ready to participate in such a large event but should consider some provincial alternatives.

For further information on literacy programs and services in Saskatchewan, please contact: ALBES, 2220 College Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V7; telephone 787-2513.

Donna Woloshyn is the Adult Literacy Liaison at Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment. Her other program responsibilities include Adult Basic Education curriculum and English as a Second Language. As a practitioner, administrator and advocate, Donna's career in adult education has included membership on many national and provincial adult education associations.



Breaking the Spell

By Wanda Hurren

Breaking the Spell is a spelling program that has been developed for independent use by adult learners. This program is useful for adults who are working with volunteer tutors and for those involved in more formal learning situations (ABE, GED, general upgrading). The program consists of an instructional videotape, an accompanying workbook and an audio tape for the purpose of spelling dictation. Adults often require a great deal of flexibility in their study arrangements. *Breaking the Spell* can be used in the privacy of a home and when time permits.

Adults involved in ABE programs, those working with volunteer tutors, and adults taking night classes to complete their high school were interviewed during the development of *Breaking the Spell*. The adults were asked what they found frustrating about spelling. Silent letters, adding endings, doubling final consonants, dropping the "e," using the dictionary, and how to study a word were identified as common areas of concern. *Breaking the Spell* addresses these and other issues of spelling study.

The saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" doesn't apply when it comes to spelling improvement. Adults (we're not really "old dogs!") have several factors in their favour. As adults become older, their spelling mistakes become more consistent. In earlier years, spelling mistakes are erratic in nature — children are learning so many things about words and sounds that spelling mistakes are varied and numerous. By the time adolescence is reached, and then on into adulthood, adults may still be making numerous

spelling mistakes. However, they now consistently make the same types of spelling mistakes.

Breaking the Spell provides an explanation of the most common types of spelling errors. Each spelling segment in the program includes a checklist of the common types of spelling errors. Adults can then begin to track their errors using this checklist. Once adults become aware of where their mistakes are usually occurring, they can begin to improve in those areas.

Another factor adults have in their favour is their prolonged/prior exposure to the English language (and other languages). Knowledge of word origins and related word forms makes it easier to generalize about certain spellings. Also, increased exposure to printed words makes it easier to recognize words that just don't "look right" when they are misspelled.

One adult learner stated that if he wasn't sure how to spell a word, he usually added a silent 'e' at the end of the word. He thought that he would be right at least 50 percent of the time! Actually, his calculations weren't far off. Over half of the words in the dictionary contain silent letters. "E" is one of the most common silent letters used.

A closer look at word origins and etymology (the study of word and phrase development) illustrates that many silent letters do have logical reasons for showing up in words. Several silent letters were pronounced at one time, but through the years (and several conquests) these letters

have become unpronounced. An example is the word "ghost". At one time the letters "g" and "h" were associated with a guttural sound — both letters were pronounced together. The "h" has now become a "ghost letter!"

When adults were asked how they usually studied a word to learn the spelling, most of the learners stated that they usually wrote the word out several times. *Breaking the Spell* presents several approaches to studying spelling. Approaches that use as many of the senses as possible are the most effective. Finding memory tricks or associating an idea with the spelling of a word is a useful study hint. Remembering the spelling of "accommodate" by thinking of two cots and two mattresses can simplify spelling study — so much so that several adult learners thought it was cheating!

How to make "educated guesses" when using the dictionary is an idea that is presented in *Breaking the Spell*. An "Educated Guesses" list is included in the reference section of the workbook. This

list includes many of the sounds of the alphabet and their corresponding spelling patterns. Learners may refer to this list for alternate spelling of phonetic sounds and spelling patterns in words they are studying.

Many of the adults who participated in the program development expressed a dislike for writing. One learner said, "If you're not a good speller, it's no fun to write!" Becoming a "good speller" isn't something magical that happens at birth. Logical suggestions and ideas are presented in *Breaking the Spell* — suggestions take the "magic" out of spelling!

The Literacy Co-ordinator, Beverley Gutenberg, of Carlton Trail Regional College (Humboldt, Saskatchewan) requested funding for the development of this program. Funding was provided through the Literacy Secretariat, Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. Wanda Hurren was responsible for the program development. Copies of the program Breaking the Spell can be obtained by contacting: Carlton Trail Regional College, Box 720 Humboldt, Saskatchewan S0K 2A0; telephone (306) 682-2623

Wanda Hurren has been teaching in the K-12 system for 12 years, including resource room/ special education (Grades 3-9). She is presently working on a Master's in Curriculum Studies and has recently begun editing On Our Way, Saskatchewan's learner newspaper. Wanda is co-author of the book, World Class Tours, which deals with the integration of language arts and multicultural education.



We regret we were unable to run this article in our last issue, which focused on literacy and international development, and are happy to present it here.

Zimbabwean magazine reaches those with little reading experience

By Regis Makwarimba

Soon after Zimbabwe's independence in the early 1980s, a need was realized for popular movements, education and organization. The Popular Education Collective (PEC) was born. PEC is a non-governmental organization which produces popular education materials and develops workshop methodologies which challenge the elitist premise and increasingly irrelevant content of the formal education and training system.

One of PEC's main projects is a bi-monthly magazine, *Read On*. Started in 1983, *Read On* is a post-literacy popular education magazine which aims to

communicate the experiences of workers, rural peasants, co-operative members, unemployed, women and literacy learners. It aims to make the voices of ordinary working and rural people heard. The magazine also acts as an educational resource tool to develop the skills and organizational strength of people.

Each issue of the magazine focuses on a particular theme. The theme is explored in a debate meeting with a group of people who have specialized knowledge on the subject. For example, a theme on unemployment would involve extensive discussions with trade union members, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations and the unemployed. *Read On* sees these debates as a forum to brainstorm the theme so that it adequately informs readers about crucial political and economic issues. Presently, the meetings are composed mainly of invited participants. But in the near future they will be more public. This will involve hiring public halls, especially in the townships where most of the potential readers live.

Themes covered in previous issues of the magazine include: Health and safety at work; Your rights under arrest; The unemployment question; Zimbabwe democracy at risk; The hunger for land; Our dying environment; Rape; Structural Adjustment; Men, women and culture; and The Press.

In addition to the major themes, the magazine also provides regular educational features on practical numeracy and functional English as well



as information on workers, popular history and social issues.

To encourage the active participation of readers, Read On has regular sections such as: What readers think about contemporary issues; The Reader's Note Pad (where readers send in their creative works such as poems, short stories, photographs or drawings); Readers' letters; and Looking for help. The amount of correspondence being received for these sections indicates the overwhelming desire for readers to have their voices heard and contribute to change.

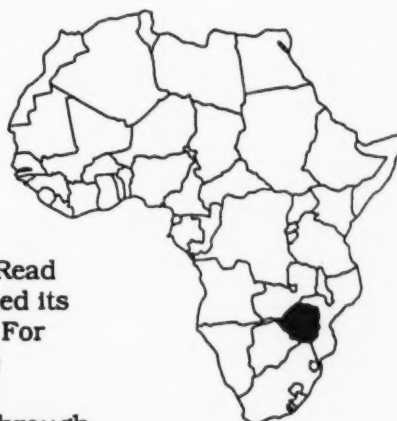
Read On has two Writers cum Reader Liaison Officers. Besides writing, their work is to forge closer links with our target readership. Some of these relationships are being developed with local trade unions and adult literacy organizations.

The magazine is written in simple but effective English. It contains many illustrations which make it easier for readers to understand the articles.

In Zimbabwe many publications are aimed at people with much higher reading abilities. A few lower language publications resulted from the literacy campaign which was at peak during the early 1980s. Read On is a transitional publication from basic literacy to more practical reading and writing skills. It is, arguably, the only Zimbabwean magazine reaching out to an audience with little reading experience.

Currently the magazine has a print run of 15,000 copies per issue. Most of the distribution is done by commercial

distributors but the commercial network does not reach remote parts of the country. So Read On has opened its own outlets. For example, the magazine is distributed through small shops in rural areas, some schools, partner organizations, township tuck-shops, street vendors and a growing subscribers' list.



Due to the financial hard times faced by our target readership, the cover price has been kept at a reasonably low figure of \$1.20. The costs of production are heavily subsidized by international donors. But with the current squeeze affecting many overseas donors and our own realization for self-sustenance, plans are underway to encourage advertising in the magazine.

As life in Zimbabwe becomes more and more difficult, Read On's role becomes more and more important. It continues to offer vital literacy which enables poor people to know more about their rights.

Regis Makwarimba is editorial co-ordinator for Read On.

THE MOVEMENT FOR CANADIAN LITERACY

Highlights from the 1993 Annual Report and Annual Meeting

The past year has been marked by major changes and new initiatives:

Board structure:

- The Board is now comprised of two representatives from each provincial or territorial coalition. One of these representatives must be an adult learner.
- The current executive and members-at-large whose terms had not expired will stay in office until the 1994 annual meeting.
- Saskatchewan representatives to the MCL Board are: Duane Rose, President, Saskatchewan Literacy Network; Lynda Magerl, Provincial Learner Representative; and Carole Olson, Member-at-large

Staff:

Nancy Jennings is the new Executive Director. Myriam Genet is the Senior Secretary. Montini Claixte is the part-time Student Assistant.

Activities:

- Literacy Bin — an information bulletin on resources
- HOTFAX — updates on current issues
- MCL Newsletter and Journal — These publications have been updated.

Networking:

MCL staff have made a special effort to build partnerships with a number of organizations including: National

Education Organizing Committee, Canadian Learning Forum, Canadian Consumers' Association, Canadian Bar Association, Canadian Bankers' Association, One Voice Seniors Network, Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women, Frontier College, Laubach Literacy, National Anti-Poverty Organization, National Adult Literacy Database and ABC Canada, UN Association (Canada).

Special Activities:

- 1993 Election Strategy — a comparison of the number of learners in each federal constituency to the number of available literacy programs which was distributed to all federal candidates.
- Love Literacy Campaign — a special event on Parliament Hill to promote awareness of literacy issues at which every MP received a valentine from learners throughout the country.

National Longitudinal Survey of Children:

A special collaboration initiated by MCL which involves the Canadian Teachers Federation, Canadian School Boards Association, Council of Ministers of Education.

For more information or to become a member, contact: Movement for Canadian Literacy, 458 MacLaren Street, 2nd Floor, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 5K6. Telephone (613) 563-2464, Fax (613) 563-2504



On June 6, the first MCL-organized provincial literacy coalition meeting was held in Ottawa. Representatives are, left to right: Wenda Housego (standing), Alberta; Nancy Jennings, interim MCL coordinator; Jan Greer, New Brunswick; Ethel Blake, North West Territories; Diane Morrow, Prince Edward Island; Nayda Veeman, Saskatchewan; Susan Sussman, Ontario; Mary Thompson-Boyd (standing), Manitoba; Valerie Baggeley, Yukon.



REGIONAL REPORTS

Parkland Regional College, Yorkton

*By Roshan Hemani
and Debbie Purton*

Following the Saskatchewan Literacy Network's initiative to organize a provincial literacy program committee, one consensus that emerged at our January 15, 1993 provincial meeting was the need to dialogue and consult with local organizations and agencies about literacy issues. We sent out more than 26 invitations to various service providers in the Parkland region — day cares, multicultural organizations, sheltered workshops, employment and training agencies, friendship centres, social services, public health, libraries, reading councils, schools and special interest groups. Seventeen representatives from 14 organizations/agencies attended an interagency meeting on March 18.

Based on the needs expressed at the meeting, our literacy program has taken the following action.

In early June, we involved the Parkland Regional Library, its 64 branches and other participating organizations/agencies in displaying and promoting International Literacy Day activities. Also as part of International Literacy Day celebrations, the literacy coordinator and a volunteer tutor-learner pair participated in a local TV talk show. We also provided press releases to the local papers and the local radio station carried announcements regarding International Literacy Day. On the day itself, September 8, we held an Open House at the college. Forty representatives from local organizations/agencies, media and the public participated in an information-sharing session. On September 9, 50 people, including local celebrities, attended the Great Spelling Challenge, held at the Parkland Mall.

In mid-September, the first issue of *Literacy Link*, a bi-monthly flyer aimed at

Cypress Hills Community College, Swift Current

By Donna Banks

The Cypress Hills Regional College Literacy Office has been a busy place this fall. We are currently working on three Literacy Partnerships projects:

- The Come Read With Me Program: participants meet weekly for six weeks to read, discuss and share children's literature.
- Reading Circles: Michele Sereda of READ CANADA is coming to Swift Current to offer a workshop on how to plan and implement reading circles. Response from the schools and community organizations has been very positive.
- Born To Read Program: We are exploring avenues to lead to the delivery of a Books For Newborns program. Public Health is very interested in becoming a partner in this activity.

I am grateful to a small group of devoted literacy people for their help and support when I first began planning these activities. Thank you to Norma Klassen and Pat Hoffman — the Saskatchewan Literacy Network's Come Read With Me facilitators and Angela Tessier and Catherine Richards for their help with Born to Read.

Donna Banks is currently organizing the first regional literacy forum for Saturday, January 15 in Swift Current in conjunction with the Network's Executive Committee meeting.

keeping the community in touch with literacy events and initiatives, was sent out.

To meet the needs of special interest groups, we have applied for National Literacy Secretariat funding for a family literacy project and a native literacy project. We have a Native Advisory Committee in place. We are also conducting a literacy presentation to native band representatives at an upcoming District Commission Region meeting.

And to meet the needs of new Canadians, we are jointly co-sponsoring ESL workshops with the Yorkton and District Multicultural Council.

A slightly longer version of this report is available from the Network office.

NETWORK NEWS

Annual Meeting and Conference: Literacy, Language and Culture

On October 15 and 16, in Watrous, the Network and the Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers (SCENES) held their second joint conference. Participants were very positive in spite of the fact that the hotel



and restaurant were stretched beyond their limits in accommodating the 110 people who attended!

Highlights of the keynote address

By Nayda Veeman

Keynote speaker Evelyn Murialdo is a Community Development Worker with the Metropolitan Housing Authority in Toronto. Evelyn immigrated to Canada in 1973 after the military coup in Chile. Her own practice of adult education and community development has been shaped by the teachings of Paolo Friere with whom she studied before coming to Canada.



*Keynote speaker,
Evelyn Murialdo*

Evelyn said every group in society has its own assumptions and is therefore racist to some extent. The problem in Canada is that most power is in the hands of a unicultural group. She defined culture as everything we learned from the moment we are born. It includes the way we eat, sleep and wash, indeed it is "integral to how we act, feel and think."

Learning a second language is an extraordinary experience since it entails translation of one culture to another means of expression. Such learning is easier when we are secure in the knowledge that "the way we are" is protected by legislation.

For literacy programs, the issue of culture results in demands for mother tongue literacy and opposition to those demands. In all cases, students do need the technical skills of reading and writing. However, English as Second language

At the Annual Meeting: The Long Branch dancers try to teach us their steps.

students need to have a sense of belonging which may include the opportunity to express themselves in their own languages.

The promotion of antiracism involves five basic principles of adult education:

1. the "joy of learning" about new worlds and the "joy of unlearning" or getting rid of myths and misconceptions. It is a process which involves naming the things that we do not like, such as prevalent ideas, changing our personal attitudes and finally changing the system which encourages racist attitudes;
2. helping learners to release the life knowledge which they have;
3. equality and democracy in the classroom where all members learn and all teach;
4. sharing our progress with companions and friends;
5. asking the right questions — "don't be afraid of the tangents" which come up in class discussion.

Literacy Program Committee

The Network has established this committee with representation throughout the province. The committee will function through a distance model with circulation of information to committee members on a bi-monthly basis. At least one meeting will be scheduled. Some committee members have agreed to participate on an interim basis until the provincial Department of Education's plan for literacy is established.

The rationale behind the establishment of this committee was to broaden the discussion of literacy issues and to encourage the development of regional partnerships. Please refer to the Regional Reports from Parkland and Cypress Hills Regional Colleges for examples of what is happening in those parts of the province.



At the Annual Meeting: Ellen Gillies is "crowned" President of SCENES by past president John Lingard.

On Our Way — Special notice to instructors and tutors

Wanda Hurren has been contracted as the editor of the paper for 1993-94. Wanda will be working out of her home in Saskatoon. An advisory committee comprised of literacy students and instructors from Saskatoon has been established and the following schedule for themes has been set:

Balancing your lifestyle	January
Winter fitness and recreation	February
Cultural awareness	March
Relationships and conflicts	April
Parenting	May
Job hunting	June

Deadline for each issue is one month prior to publication.

The provincial learners committee recommended that literacy regions submit articles to the paper. These submissions may be related to the themes or to other topics. Please contact the Network office if you would like to get your students or programs on the schedule; guidelines for submissions are available.

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) Update

The Network will be helping with the Saskatchewan update in December. This will be based on the survey results which are submitted to the NALD office in London, Ontario.

Introducing the Network's new board members

Keppel Disney is a student in adult upgrading at SIAST Kelsey Saskatoon. He left high school in 1982 with a vocational Grade 9 and worked for the next 10 years in the hospitality industry. In 1979, Keppel realized he wanted to improve his reading so he got a literacy tutor and later was diagnosed as learning disabled. He was the 1992 recipient of a Literacy Award of Merit and has been a member of the Provincial Learners Committee since 1990.

Louise Folk works in the Business literacy program at Regina Public Library. She is the Regina Literacy Association's representative to the Literacy Program Centre. Previously, Louise worked for the City of Regina supervising neighbourhood centres and youth programs.

Sherri Roger is employed as a Special Needs Assistant at Jubilee Elementary School. She also works part-time as a Regional Service Assistant at North West Regional College. She is a certified Laubach tutor, and sits on both the provincial Board as Vice President and is the Saskatchewan representative on the National Board of Laubach. She also serves on the Local Laubach Board as secretary.

Gord Richardson is currently the Manager of Communications, Wellness and Health Promotion Branch of Saskatchewan Health. His interest in literacy includes acting as Saskatchewan Health's Literacy Resource Person, with responsibility for print material at a literacy level. Gord is a board member of the Sask Tele-Learning Association and a member of Saskatchewan Association for

Lifelong Learning and the International Association of Business Communicators.

Ron Wallace is a Coordinator in Continuing Education Services with the Saskatoon Board of Education and is in a graduate studies program in Adult and Continuing Education. He believes adult literacy is a key to success of children in school and is an advocate of partnerships between organizations to provide integrated and comprehensive services to families. He is currently working on a project to establish a community-based resource centre for youth that will work with the youth services network in Saskatoon to enhance the accessibility and delivery of available programs.

Linda Magerl was appointed as Provincial Learners Representative and will have a position on the Network board.



Back issues of *Literacy Works* available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for \$5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

Vol. 1, No. 2	Computers and Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 1	Women and Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 2	Plain Language
Vol. 3, No. 3	Family literacy
Vol. 3, No. 4	Special Issue on Literacy Resources
Vol. 4, No. 1	New Canadians and Literacy
Vol. 4, No. 2	Literacy and Learning Disabilities
Vol. 4, No. 3	Update Issue
Vol. 4, No. 4	Native Education and Literacy

If you have comments on any of the articles in this issue of **Literacy Works**, we'd be happy to hear them. Please send letters to:



Liz Ormiston, Editor

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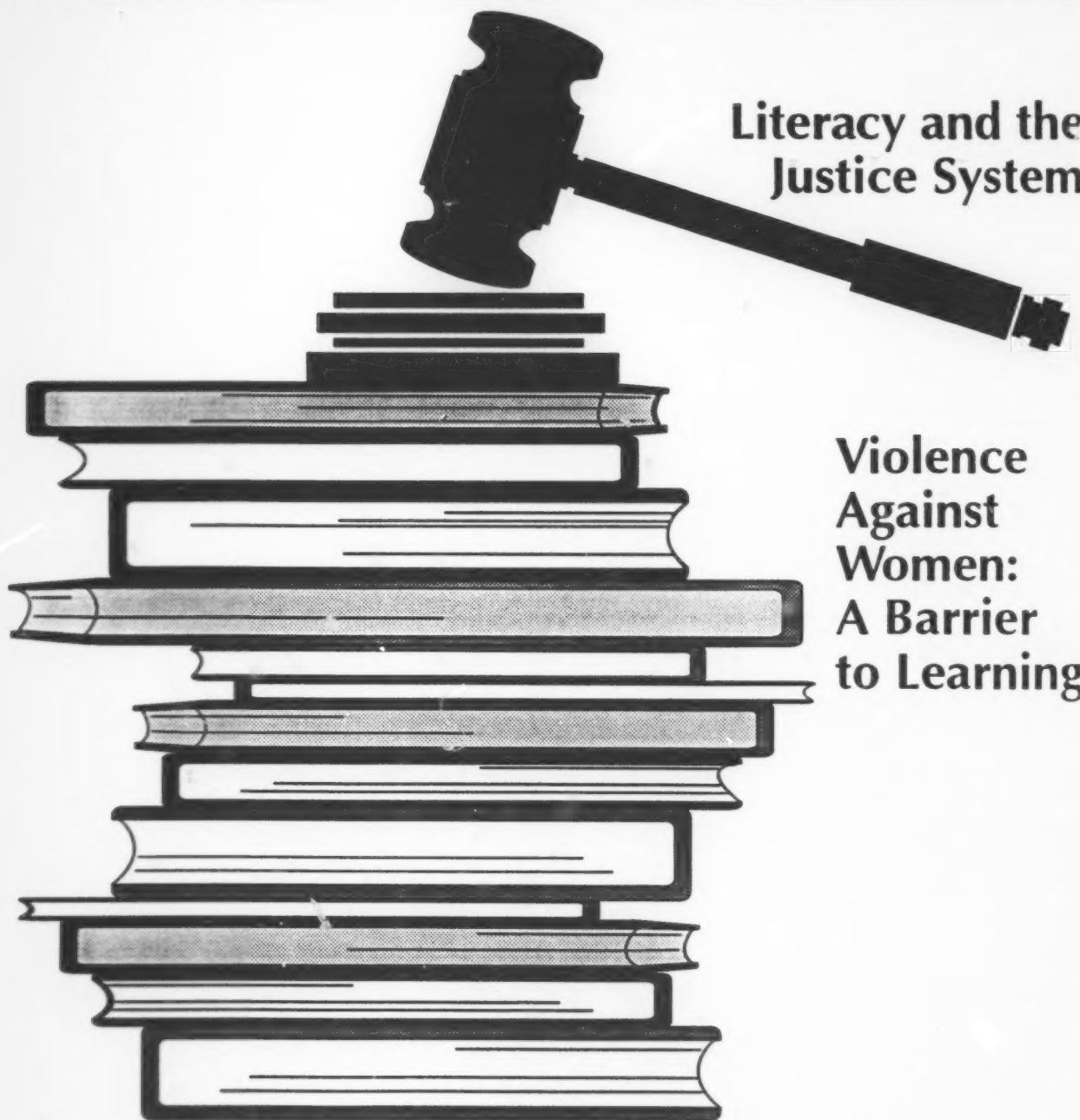
LITERACY

W • O • R • K • S

Vol. 5, No. 3

A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network

Spring 1994



**Literacy and the
Justice System**

**Violence
Against
Women:
A Barrier
to Learning**

Price: \$5.00 for non-members (includes tax)

Editorial Committee this issue:

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Ron Torgerson

Literacy Works editor:

Liz Ormiston

Contributors this issue:

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INTERIM EDITOR FOR *Literacy Works*

Jerry Horne of Regina will be acting as editor of *Literacy Works* for the Summer and Fall, 1994 issues while Liz Ormiston takes a maternity leave. Jerry is a partner with Birdsong Communications, a film and video production company. Jerry also has a strong background in producing print publications and has worked extensively with non-governmental organizations. Jerry can be reached at:

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Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Jerry Horne, Birdsong Communications, 806 Victoria Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan S4N 0R6.

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Jerry Horne at (306) 359-3070.

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*Thank you to the
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for providing funding for this issue of
Literacy Works.*

LITERACY NEWS

Veeman consulting for Tanzanian literacy

Nayda Veeman, executive director of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, was seconded to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) International Program for the period February 15 to March 4 as a consultant to the Sustaining Tanzanian Literacy Project. Tanzania is of great interest to literacy workers because of its mass literacy campaign. The percentage of the population which could read and write increased from 33 percent in 1971 to 80 percent in 1983. In addition, the Tanzanian government has put a high priority on adult education.

Literacy in the Yellow Pages

ABC Canada has developed nine TV advertisements for the "Learn Page." The Learn Page lists non-profit literacy numbers in the Yellow Pages of Canadian telephone directories. Canadian Yellow Pages Service is providing the space which has a media value of nearly \$4 million.

New funding for visually impaired

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind announces funding for projects which would address the needs of visually impaired aboriginal people.

Proposals must identify the needs of the target population, number of blind people to be served and describe the program and expected outcomes. Funding limit is \$10,000. For more information contact: Linda Studhome, Director of Rehabilitation, 320 McLeod St., Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1A3. Tel: (613) 563-4021 or Fax: (613) 232-9070 (The Network office has a few application forms).

Submission Deadline:
March 31, 1994

The great skill saw-off

Reprinted from the Globe & Mail, January 10, 1994.

North American companies report a surging need to improve employees' literacy and communication skills. Yet they fall short in providing such skills through their own training programs. A survey of 443 companies, released last month by Olsten Corp., the temporary help company, shows a yawning chasm between skill needs and training provided.

The biggest gap lies in writing skills. Eighty percent of employers say they seek better writing performance from employees, but only 25 percent provide training to meet this need. Among Canadian companies in the survey (12 percent of the total), 76 percent said they needed higher writing skills, while 33 percent were offering such programs.

Fifty-one percent of all

companies surveyed said they have increased their overall need for literate employees in the past year. That is 17 percentage points higher than a year ago.

Canadian companies, while not big providers of literacy training, do better than their U.S. counterparts: 30 percent here have such programs, compared with 23 percent in the United States.

Helping immigrants access English training

Reprinted from the Saskatoon Star Phoenix, January 6, 1994.

Zoya Shmyr and Keith Karasin of the Regina Open Door Society are hoping to make English training more accessible. Shmyr is collecting information about immigrants in 36 rural communities to find out how many people need the training.

Once they find out about a group of people who need training, executive director Karasin will go to the community to see who else may have been missed. Armed with information about the need, he can apply to the federal government for money to set up training classes.

Many newcomers have no way of finding out about the survey or potential learning opportunities, Karasin said. He hopes sponsoring groups or others who know immigrants in communities like Kindersley, Rosetown, Outlook, Biggar, Watrous or Wakaw will contact Shmyr. She can be reached in Regina by calling 352-3500.

Literacy must continue to be a priority for prisons

By David Simpson

Inadequate education as a contributing factor to criminal behaviour is a well-documented matter. As many as one-third of the prison population in Saskatchewan experience reading and writing deficiencies. It is not surprising that literacy has been identified as a priority in both federal and provincial corrections.

What are less clearly understood are the contributing factors and the difficulties in addressing this challenge in a prison setting.

It is first necessary to identify the individual who would benefit from a literacy program. It is not uncommon for the individual with a literacy deficiency to have developed effective ways of hiding this fact. All too often a history of negative experiences with the education system as a young person has resulted in an aversion to any new learning or school-like situation.

Peers or fellow inmates can be successful in identifying the individual in need of a literacy program and in getting him or her in the door.

In order for a literacy program in a prison setting to be successful, it is necessary to create a safe learning environment where the student is able to deal with his or her insecurities and is able to take the necessary risks without fear of humiliation or ridicule.

A compounding problem for many literacy students in Saskatchewan Corrections facilities is the difficulty that comes with English as a Second Language. The ability of fellow inmates, who are tutors, to speak both languages is an obvious benefit.



Subjects or topics that are used in the program must be of interest and must have relevance to the students. Again, fellow inmates can be particularly helpful in identifying these topics.

While a prison is a unique environment and presents many obstacles, it also offers unique resources and opportunities. Initiative and creativity are required to address successfully the challenge of dealing effectively with illiteracy in this setting.

If released offenders are to have a reasonable ability to meet their needs in today's society, they must be functionally literate. This is essential if they are to access and utilize the resources and opportunities that are available to all people. It is obvious, therefore, that literacy must continue to be a priority in prison and correctional programming.

David Simpson is former Director of the Prince Albert Correctional Centre. His 38 years in the Saskatchewan criminal justice system include municipal police, young offenders, adult probation, women's corrections facility and men's corrections facility.

Program gives ownership and responsibility to inmates

By David Simpson

The Prince Albert Provincial Correctional Centre is a 275-bed facility and is based on the "living unit" concept.*

In 1989-90 we were well into what continues to be a very long period of shrinking resources. We were faced with the need to "do more with less." With there being a high percentage of inmates who are functionally illiterate, literacy had to continue to be a priority even during hard times. It was decided that we would attempt to have inmates act as literacy tutors and we would solicit help from the community.

The literacy program at our facility has been operating now for three years and inmates do indeed act as tutors. They also have major input in the selection of replacement tutors and actively identify and recruit students from the prison population.

Significant support has come from the community. Materials have come from private and public donations. There has been excellent and critical support from numerous community organizations such as the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology; Gabriel Dumont Institute; Prince Albert Indian and Metis Friendship Centre; Prince Albert Tribal Council; Mid West News Agency; Daily Herald Newspaper; Saskatchewan Penitentiary; Northern Lights School District; J.M. Cuelenaere Library; Prince

Albert Catholic School System; Carlton Comprehensive High School; Prince Albert Rural School District; Saskatchewan University Native Teachers Education Program; and Frontier College.

Under the very able direction of our literacy co-ordinator, Karen Dvorak, the program came together, took root and has continued to grow and mature.

Three years of experience with this model has been a learning experience for everyone.

We have found that fellow inmates are effective at identifying and recruiting literacy students and in replacement of tutors. They are sensitive to the critical considerations in dealing with fellow inmates.

When inmates recruit and tutor other inmates in a prison literacy program, there are two beneficiaries: the student improves his level of literacy and the tutor experiences personal growth and an increased sense of responsibility and self-worth.

The inmate-driven program has gone through a unique evolution over the past three years. A more culturally and environmentally-relevant program has developed to meet the needs of a predominantly aboriginal inmate population. The program does much more than simply offer an opportunity to improve reading and writing skills. Other related

*The "living unit" concept means each inmate has his own room and shares a kitchen, laundry room, and TV room with a small group of other inmates.

living skills are also addressed in an environment that offers a safe atmosphere in which necessary risks can be taken.

The development of the program to this stage has not happened without a struggle.

The idea of inmates having responsibility and control is not always well received by all prison staff. History has all too often illustrated that too much poorly supervised inmate power and control can lead to disaster. To create the essentials necessary for a productive learning environment in a prison setting, for individuals who have been turned off any academic setting, is indeed a challenge.

What has developed is a level of inmate ownership and responsibility that works toward the prevention of disruptive behaviour or any other actions that would tend to discredit the program.

Recent changes to the program will see the addition of a number of new modules to address more effectively the aboriginal cultural needs. Elders and other resource people from the community will be involved in delivering these new modules.

Diminishing resources, increasing emphasis on aboriginal issues and growing demands on the system are resulting in major changes. At the same time, literacy is being identified nationwide as a priority. We will need to continue to be innovative and creative to meet these challenges.

Many who participate in this program see it as a gateway to freedom — freedom from the limiting restraints of illiteracy and hopefully a gateway to a new way of life.

David Simpson is former Director of the Prince Albert Correctional Centre.

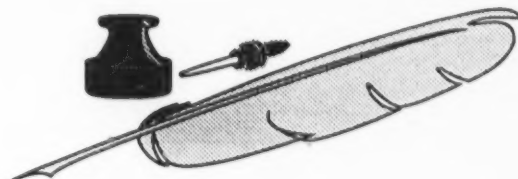


Jane Austin goes to prison: readings in critical thought and cultural literacy

By Colleen Hawkey

In a small classroom tucked away in the education wing of a federal prison, a dozen or so GED (Grade 12 Equivalency) students sat down with an instructor and inmate tutor to discuss such pressing issues as love, freedom and equality. The day before they had read several pages from Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Recognizing that there might be difficulties with the author's style and vocabulary, they had worked through any unfamiliar language and constructed a working vocabulary list. They were now prepared to move on to the discussion part of the class.

At this point, the reading served as a springboard for an exploration of the social, political and economic realities of love and marriage in the 18th century. Comparisons were made with how men and women lived then and how we live now. While the values, expectations and assumptions of both the author and the students were explored, it was recognized that there were no absolute truths and no specific right or wrong answers. The students could focus their energy on clearly expressing, supporting and defending their ideas and arguments. The instructor took on the role of moderator, facilitated the discussion, and provided any needed background information about the material.



With the instructor essentially neutral, the discussion became a process of discovery for the students as they ranged over issues such as modern feminism, gender roles and family law. Students used the reading to trace a cultural line that linked the past with the present. As one student said, "It helps make more sense out of all the stuff that's going on with women right now. It's pretty weird considering here you think everything is either black or white. But really, it's not like that. There are just too many issues to pick one side." Despite complaints of being made to "think too hard" students were often amazed and proud of their expanded vocabularies and improved reasoning skills.

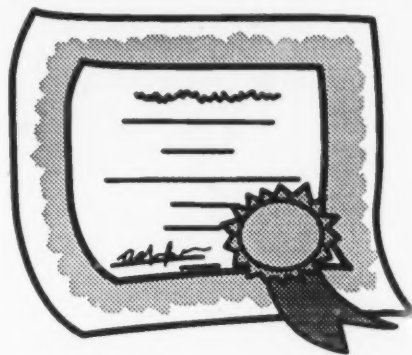
Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is only one of the many titles listed in *Readings in Critical Thought and Cultural Literacy*, the humanities-based core curriculum developed by Dr. Stephen Duguid of Simon Fraser University. The curriculum is thematically arranged in

units that explore such issues as human distinctiveness, gender relations and relationships between individuals and between the individual and society. It includes excerpts from a wide range of authors such as Carl Sagan, Fay Weldon, Dostoevsky, Plato, and George Orwell.

Until this past summer, the curriculum had been taught in several prisons in British Columbia. It had served as a means of introducing GED students and first-time university students to key thinkers of the Western intellectual tradition. The classes provided a forum for the development of critical reasoning skills. Students could explore cause and effect relationships, question conflicting values and develop an understanding of distinctions between validity, logic and truth. Often the students who enrolled were learning about these authors, with whom many of us are familiar, for the first time. This is not surprising, considering many of them had not completed, or in some cases begun, high school.

Despite the consistent lack of formal education, students' responses to the curriculum were positive as they discovered a legitimate arena for the expression of often controversial ideas, and the challenge to develop articulate and defensible arguments. Some learned

to speak for themselves, and others learned to lose arguments graciously. A certificate of completion was awarded at the end of the course.



For more information about the humanities core curriculum contact: Dr. Stephen Duguid, Graduate Liberal Studies Program, Simon Fraser University, 515 Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5K3.

Colleen Hawkey was a GED instructor with the Simon Fraser University Prison Education Program from 1990 until the closure of the program in the summer of 1993. She is currently teaching GED at Douglas College, New Westminster, BC.

Closed circuit television teaching reaches more inmates

By Bea Fisher

Taking part in education can be interesting, fun and hard work. But first, you must get to school.

In prisons, a large number of students cannot attend school. All prisons have a hospital or other areas where inmates must stay, but which they may not leave to go to school. At our prison, the Saskatchewan Penitentiary in Prince Albert, we decided to use closed circuit television to reach these learners. All of the reading, writing, spelling, math, science, and social studies lessons from Grades 1-10 and Life Skills were produced by PAL-TV (Programs in Adult Learning through Television) in our school, using our own equipment. The project took four years to complete and we have 198 lessons in our TV library. We have been broadcasting daily from 8:30 am to 4 pm for the last seven years.

Learners can enrol in the program through SIAST (the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and watch the lessons on their TV in-cell. Homework is sent to the teacher by the inside mail system, and learners come to school one at a time for tests and extra help. Copies of the taped lessons are available for purchase by other groups.

Many of our learners report that they decided to start working on Grade 10

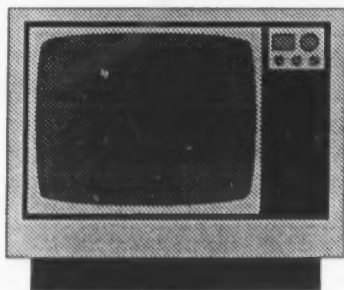
because they had seen the TV lessons. In a survey done in 1988, learners said that seeing the teacher on TV every day reminded them to keep working at their lessons. Being able to see the teacher every day made some learners feel that they could do the work and helped them choose lessons over soap operas.

In 1990, we expanded the use of the lessons to include the prison next door, where inmates who work half-days can follow lessons on TV and take their homework to the Learning Centre in the school for extra help once a week.

In general, many of our Adult Basic Education (ABE) learners received their Basic Literacy and ABE 10 certificates through the PAL-TV System. We are proud of our program because we have been able to give more learners access to education programs and we are pleased that some other institutions have decided to use the system as well.

Bea Fisher has been teaching literacy for 11 years. She works with the Saskatchewan Literacy Network and with the YWCA as a volunteer. She has been working with the Correctional Services of Canada for 10 years, and is now helping to develop a curriculum that will make education more relevant to her students.

Bea has also developed, for the Prince Albert Literacy Network, a series of seven half-hour TV shows on Literacy in the Workplace. The series follows a talk-show interview format. The title of the series is Literacy Works! It ran on Shaw Cable 10 in Prince Albert twice in 1993 and was well received by the viewing audience. Copies can be borrowed from the Prince Albert Literacy Network.



Learning disabled persons at high risk for prison sentences

By Dr. Carol Crealock

In Canada, persons with learning disabilities and persons identified as young offenders share many characteristics. Approximately 10 percent of the population are learning disabled; but within the correction population, researchers have found anywhere from 15 to 80 percent who are learning disabled. Our work with offenders has identified approximately 30 to 40 percent suffering from learning disabilities.

A major difference among these studies has to do with how the ability (intelligence) factor is defined. Associations like the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) define persons with learning disabilities as having potentially average or above average intelligence. However, Seigel (1989), in her work with young offenders, contends that having a learning disability interferes with general ability, and argues that any person whose intelligence quotient is 80 or above, and whose academic skills are in the bottom

25 percent on achievement tests (for example, scoring at the 20th percentile on the Wide Range Achievement Test — Revised) is learning disabled. Stanovich (1989) supports Seigel's argument. He describes the way in which reading problems result in further difficulties. His elaboration of the Matthew Effects finds that problems with reading lead to reduced involvement with print, which, in turn, results in poor self-esteem and low motivation and, finally, in further reading problems. Others, however, find that intelligence scores fail to support the hypothesis that inferior ability is an independent risk factor for learning disabilities and subsequent delinquency (Camularo, Fenton & Kinscherff, 1992.)

The chart below indicates how the characteristics often found in both learning disabled students and young offenders are manifested.

continued . . .

CHARACTERISTICS SHARED AMONG YOUNG OFFENDERS AND STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Characteristic	Example
Attention problems	Not paying attention while driving
Hyperactive	Constant fidgeting
Impulsive	Stealing a package of gum
Memory deficits	Needs instructions repeated
Poor motor coordination	Learning to drive
Visual spatial deficits	Awareness of street location
Deficits in metacognitive strategies	Cannot organize possessions
Difficulties with time	Late for appointments
Social skills deficits	Has few friends
Academic retardation	Reads very slowly

Learning disabled persons at high risk for prison sentences *continued*



Persons with learning disabilities are persons who can learn but they do so inefficiently, that is, they learn at a slower rate or through different means when compared to the average individual. Many offenders who have limited literacy may not have been identified as learning disabled when they were younger and

therefore saw themselves as 'stupid' and unable to learn. They often failed and dropped out of school at the elementary or secondary level. Years of accumulated frustration and failure may

have resulted in suicide, withdrawn or aggressive behaviour.

Studies have found that while many non-handicapped adolescents commit criminal offences, learning disabled persons are more likely to be caught, found guilty and sentenced (Keilitz, Zaremba & Broder, 1979). Following are some examples of how adolescents with learning disabilities can get into trouble with the law:

1. **Attention.** They may want a tape and impulsively take it. Others who do not have problems with attention may also shoplift, but are more careful and watch for a time when shop clerks are busy and unlikely to see them.
2. **Memory.** Many persons with learning disabilities have difficulty with short

term memory. This can get them into trouble when they tell their stories in different ways to different people. For example, when a young man hits a car due to careless driving caused by inattention, he is often questioned first by the police, then the court officer and finally the judge. When the judge hears a version of the incident that differs in the time or order of certain events the judge may see this as lying rather than as a memory problem.

3. **Hyperactivity.** The learning disabled person may continually tap his or her feet and take his or her foot off the brake when coming up to a red light.
4. **Spatial Skills.** The learning disabled student may have difficulty judging how far ahead the car is and hit it, or be unable to automatically identify a road sign and thus go through an intersection.
5. **Social Skills.** One of the social problems the learning disabled person has is with pragmatics (verbal and non-verbal social usage of language). If the person who is in court for careless driving does not appreciate the importance of dressing well, being clean, and listening to the judge, he or she is more likely to be found guilty than is the person who is aware of these things.

Thus, our careless driver who has difficulties with attending to significant aspects of driving, has problems judging distance, difficulties with memory and organization of events, and lacks sensitivity to appropriate court behaviour, will more likely be found guilty and receive a more serious penalty than will the driver who does not have these problems.

This article has tried to show how students who have learning disabilities

can find themselves in serious difficulty with the law. Supporting them at early stages and showing parents, educators and court workers how many of their problem behaviours are not the result of lying or laziness, can help them behave in a more positive manner.



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Dr. Crealock is Professor and Chair of the Division of Educational Psychology and Special Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario. Over the past 20 years, her teaching, research, and workshop activities have focused on learning abilities in youth, young offenders, and adults. More recently, she has studied relations among computers, problem solving and writing within this population.

COMING UP IN LITERACY WORKS

Summer '94:

Francophone Literacy
in Canada
(Deadline: April 1)

Fall '94:

Family Literacy
(Deadline: June 15)

Winter '94-95:

Mother Tongue Literacy
(Deadline: October 15)

Legal language a barrier for those with low English literacy skills

Excerpt from a 1992 research report by the National Anti-Poverty Organization

Asian women and men are accustomed to bringing their own shopping bags to stores. An elderly Asian literacy student with a bag full of purchases decided to use the washroom and was arrested for shoplifting before he had a chance to pay for his selections. He was traumatized by the experience.

The Native Court workers program was cut in Saskatchewan, even though it kept thousands out of jail in its last year of operation. "Now they're opening new jail cells all over the place."

... a literacy worker

Service, advocacy and literacy workers pointed out many barriers in the legal system:

- Legal language is a barrier for everyone, but particularly for the undereducated.
- Legal aid is insufficient. Individuals also have to pay for legal help if they have even a small amount of money. Legal aid does not cover appeal boards and tribunals in most provinces.
- People may get into trouble because they are unaware of laws or the implications of legal agreements they have signed. If a person facing charges gets a subpoena, cannot read it and fails to show up for a court date, she or he now faces an additional charge. Many know little about the workings of the legal system.
- Lawyers, judges, clerks and others can be very insensitive towards people who cannot read or who just do not understand the system. One social worker said Canadian law firms are becoming factories, to the detriment of poor, illiterate and elderly people — anyone who might need extra attention and patience.

- Many of the crimes poor people commit are directly related to not having enough money on which to live. Moreover, many go to jail for minor offenses, simply because they cannot pay fines.

Our interviewees told us that native people face particularly great disadvantages:

- In the Yukon, native people make up 20 percent of the general population, but 80 percent of the prison population. Many natives are in jail because they cannot pay fines (... because they cannot get a job ... because they are undereducated ...).
- The legal system imposed on the Inuit in the Northwest Territories replaces their traditional way of dealing with offenders, which is to ostracize, but not incarcerate, them. Many feel lost in the foreign system. Legal language is often impossible to translate into native languages, and many offenders have low literacy levels and little knowledge of English.
- Many small communities have no lawyer. An individual might meet her or his legal representative five minutes before a trial.

Everyone we spoke to agreed the complexities of the legal system and its language make it necessary for people with low education and other disadvantages to have access to advocates. They also need plainly written legal information, as well as freedom from racism and sexism in the law and in legal practice.

Reprinted with permission from "Literacy and Poverty: A View from the Inside" published by the National Anti-Poverty Organization, 1992.



Violence against women: a barrier to learning

Literacy Works is proud to present the following articles, which focus on the needs of women inmates and, in particular, on the impact of violence and other forms of abuse on women's ability to become fully literate. The Saskatchewan Literacy Network appreciates the funding and encouragement received from the Solicitor General of Canada Secretariat for this issue of Literacy Works.

Resolution of abuse must preceed healing and new learning

By Wanita Koczka

Violence has always had a tragic and wide-spread effect on the growth and development of children. The negative effects of violence can also be described as barriers to education and learning. These barriers can remain in place in adult life as well.

We know the cycle of violence and we know there is little a child can do to remove herself from this devastating cycle. The child is caught in this experience with no way out. Thus, the child learns to cope with the violence, whatever its form. Children who are subject to violence use a variety of ways to cope; some block the violence out, some try even harder and even excel in school. Many are unable to concentrate and so are unable to take in and process information as is required at school. For many, coping with violence is all-consuming. Many child victims of violence who are unable to participate as required in school become chronic absentees. They may become involved in negative peer groups; they may also experiment with alcohol and drugs to escape the violence and the other problems they are experiencing. They start to use violence towards others as a means of power and control themselves and the cycle begins again. Some of these young people end up in foster homes, youth homes and youth detention centers. Some graduate from these establishments to the adult corrections systems.

In Saskatchewan most women who are incarcerated have been victims of some form of violence. Most of these women also have an alcohol and/or drug addiction. In most cases, the alcohol or drugs are used to lessen the pain of violence and abuse the woman has experienced. Women who are incarcerated in Saskatchewan have approximately

a Grade 6 education, with few marketable job skills.

When laid out in this manner, the impact of violence on learning and education becomes more clear as it comes full circle. Issues of violence in a woman's life need to be resolved before healing and further learning, growth and development can take place. Women who have been victims of violence need to understand the connection between violence and addictions and the impact of violence and addictions on learning. People who have experience working with women who have been victims of violence know that most victims of violence have learned excellent coping skills. Many of these coping mechanisms are not healthy, but they help the victim to stay alive.

People who have experience working with women who have been victims of violence also know that in many cases the ability of victims to learn or participate in learning activities has been stifled. In a violent relationship, someone else controls what you say, what you know and what you do. You are not free to learn and grow.

Women who have experienced a lot of violence in their lives do not have power and control over their own lives and the learning process. In many cases, for adult women victims of violence, upgrading is not a viable option. Too many barriers exist that do not allow them to attend classes on a regular basis, including ongoing violence in their present relationship. Location of classes, transportation, child care and cost of classes are also barriers to further education for these women. Victims who continue to cope with violence by abusing drugs and/or alcohol have this as another barrier. In most cases, the abusive partner is not

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING



PHOTIS FORBES

supportive of the victim participating in any form of education.

Women who are victims of violence who end up in conflict with the law or incarcerated know too well the cycle of violence and the effects of the violence on their own lives and the lives of their children. They face the same barriers to education and learning as noted above. In addition they are labelled as criminal. Given all these factors, participating in education is not an easy task for these women. They need to free themselves from some of the pain of violence and external control and begin healing before learning can take place.

Freeing themselves from the pain of violence is a long and slow process. For many women, freeing themselves from the violence, power and control is the first step in the healing cycle. Once this has begun, the way is cleared for other education and learning to take place. It is a long and painful process, but many do succeed.

Wanita Koczka is a member of Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW). She works with incarcerated women at Pine Grove Women's Correctional Centre in Prince Albert.

Working on memories of abuse with students

By Jenny Horsman

Several years ago, I said to a learner in a group I was working with that it was okay to speak to me about her abusive childhood, when she called to apologize for a brief mention in the group. It was the beginning of a relationship which I had no experience to know how to handle.

This woman had never told anybody else about her childhood. The telling marked the beginning of what eventually became a special kind of tutoring situation. We began to meet regularly to read, write and talk about her memories of abuse.



Since then, I have continued to tutor her and have gone through many highs and lows as I tried to learn how to support but not rescue her and to encourage her to take up her own challenges rather than leaning on me.

I have had to learn to set limits and support her in keeping them. I have had to become clear about the limits of my role, my responsibility, and my time and avoid being drawn into providing support that was beyond what I felt comfortable with.

We have both had to learn how to be respectful of other's needs. We have both had to acknowledge a powerful friendship bounded by the particular work we do together.

This tutoring, though it often seems immensely difficult, has also been the most exciting literacy learning I have seen. I have often spoken about the value of literacy as making it possible for a person to read about the experience of others and write about her own experiences. In this way, a person can see the commonality of her own situation with others. As she sees her own experience in writing, she can get a distance from it and can assess it differently. But I have never seen this value of literacy so powerfully as in tutoring focusing on experiences of violence and abuse which have been hidden as a shameful secret.

When we first began to read other stories of women's experiences of abuse, from Newfoundland, Toronto, England and Australia, I think the commonality of experience was crucial to her understanding of what she had lived through and the writing became an essential element of every session. Its purpose was to get the memories out and, in a symbolic sense, leave them behind.

As she has continued to read both about other women's experiences and theory about the impact of abuse on a woman's life, I believe she has

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING

grown in self-esteem and confidence to express herself and her literacy skills have improved at the same time.

The point at which she was able to recognize that abuse was not her fault was a major turning point for her. She has built her sense of herself as someone who has a right to demand respect and she has become a vocal spokesperson for learners' rights. She became clearer about the roots of her intense anger and more able to separate that well of past anger from irritation over present problems.

I believe literacy workers must make it clear that the realities of a learner's life do belong in the literacy program and it is acceptable to talk and write about any experiences, however horrifying.

But I think we must be clear that we are not therapists. We must help learners identify other resources to support them if they want to work on issues of abuse.

And I think that, even if a woman doesn't ask to work on issues of violence, we still have an obligation to make space, to allow her the possibility to focus on her experiences. Women who have learned all their lives that they must remain silent and deny the realities of what has happened to them will not easily ask to work on their memories of abuse.

However, I think we must also be careful not to make women feel they have an obligation to reveal details of their lives and, when women do speak out, be extremely sensitive to the consequences and to ensuring safety and supports for them.

I think that those of us who work in literacy need to explore a variety of ways of working collaboratively with those outside the literacy movement who work with women who have been abused. For example, we can work with counsellors in women's shelters or feminist

therapists. As literacy workers, we can learn from their experience how to deal sensitively, not only with the issues, but also with the relationships which develop.

I believe we cannot separate literacy from the experience of violence in so many women's lives, without denying women the empowering possibilities of literacy.

I want to describe briefly some aspects of how I have worked in the hope that other literacy tutors might be encouraged to undertake this sort of rewarding and, I think, essential form of literacy work.

The main resources for my work with the woman who had been abused have been *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, and *The Courage to Heal Workbook* by Laura Davis. These books have been invaluable. My only criticism of them is that they are not in plain English, but that seems a minor problem as I can always paraphrase the wording. I can invariably rely on the explanations of all aspects of the experiences of abuse to be sensitive, insightful and never judgemental of those who have survived abuse in any way they can.

When we first began to read this book, the woman I work with could hardly believe that the authors didn't know her and her experiences, so apt were their questions and observations. It was this which helped her to believe that her experiences were not so different from other women's — how else could the authors be so right?

The book has also been crucial for me. It has helped me to clarify that I am not a therapist and that I do not have any experience with issues of

continued . . .

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING

Working on memories of abuse with students *continued*

abuse. Whenever the woman asks me questions for which I do not feel I have an answer, we look to the book to see what answer it offers.

When we first started to work together, the workbook provided us with guidelines about creating safety and ground rules which we were able to build on to make sure we both felt comfortable. It also helped me to be clear that I do not have to set the pace of the work we do. Every so often, we look at the table of contents and mark selections the woman wants to work on in the near future. At intervals, we also talk about how it is going and what issues she wants to focus on for the next few months. Then we can again look to our books to see what they offer on the themes. One lesson I have learned is that she may need to read some sections many times.

We also have another routine which we follow as unfailingly as using *The Courage To Heal*. We end with some poems. This time of reading poetry together provides us with a sense of closure, a way to push the past back a little, to leave us a little less raw before we both return to our normal lives.

The ending of "A Just Anger" by Kate Braid makes me think of the importance of the work we do together:

*A good anger acted upon
is beautiful as lightening
and swift with power.
A good anger swallowed,
a good anger wallowed
clots of blood
to slime*

To work on memories of abuse is a hard and painful process, but it is also beautiful and full of power. To leave the memories unspeakable and hidden is to leave them fester and limit potential.

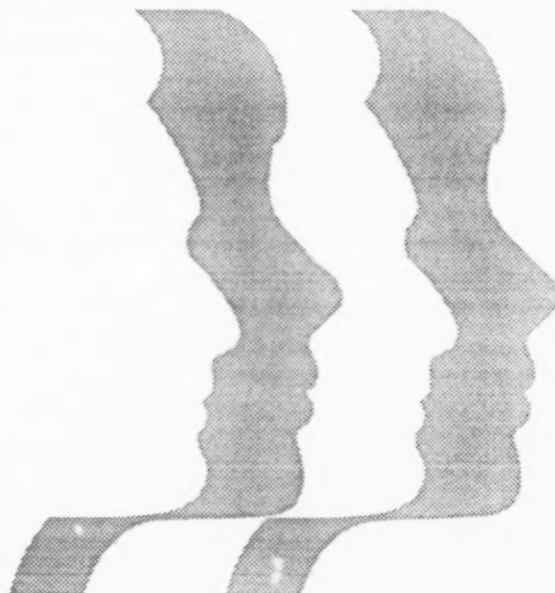
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Poetry:

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This article is excerpted from a longer article by Jenny Horsman, originally published in the September 1993 issue of the Feminist Literacy Workers' Network newsletter.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING



What can you do to help a student who is being abused?

Do

- Believe her
- Listen and affirm her feelings without judging her

Give clear messages that:

- She does not cause the abuse
- She is not to blame
- She cannot change her partner's behaviour
- Apologies and promises will not end the violence
- Abuse is not loss of control, it is a means of control
- Wife assault is a crime
- She is not alone
- She is not crazy
- Violence is **never justifiable**
- The safety of the woman and her children is always the first priority
- Talk with her about her options and help her plan for her and her children's safety
- Give her the time and space to make her own decisions
- Give her a list of the key community resources that support and work with assaulted women
- Respect her need for confidentiality

An abused woman needs our support and encouragement in order to make choices that are right for her. However, there are some forms of advice that are detrimental and even dangerous for her to hear:

Don't

- Tell her what to do, when to leave or when not to leave
- Tell her to go back to the situation and try a little harder
- Rescue her by trying to find quick solutions
- Suggest you try and talk to her partner to try and straighten things out
- Tell her she should stay for the sake of the children.

Resources

The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence at Health and Welfare Canada carries the following items:

- Fact Sheet on Wife Assault
- Catalogue on the Family Violence Film and Video Collection

For information, call 1-800-267-1291, or write to: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 7th Floor, Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 1B5.

The Family Violence Program of the Canadian Council on Social Development can consult on program-development ideas. For information, call the Family Violence Program at 613-728-1865, or write to CCSD, 55 Parkdale, Box 3505, Station C, Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 4G1.

Adapted from Vis-a-vis, The National Newsletter on Family Violence, Volume 9, No. 1, 1991.

Creating a peaceful place for learning at Pine Grove

By Lavera Schiele

The general educational needs of the women at Pine Grove Correctional Centre are numerous. Women come to Pine Grove with anywhere from no academic education to having completed their Grade 12.

In a sense, the classroom is more like an old-fashioned schoolhouse where all grades share one room. The exception is the Basic Literacy class which I teach separately on one given day.

A person on the "outside" may wonder what goes on in the classroom. We offer the Basic Literacy, which covers Grades 1 through 5. The rest of the week, women come to the class to work on their Adult Basic Education (grades 5-10), GED (Grade 12 equivalency), High School Correspondence or University Correspondence Classes. CTBS testing is done, which enables the women to apply for certain programs upon their release. Needless to say, I'm kept hopping from desk to desk as I venture to help each woman at her particular level.

I feel it's very important for women to explore other aspects of their lives, not only academics. Therefore, I offer art, poetry, cultural information, typing and word processing. Native history is also included in the general classes. People from Prince Albert come to Pine Grove to give information on resources for women. We have on occasion gone on field trips, such as visiting a Hutterite Colony, and hope this year to visit Wanuskewin or Batoche.

It's important to run the classroom as a quiet, peaceful place where the women can get away from the regular life of the institution. We still need to follow the rules and guidelines of the institution, but, by the way the room is decorated and the way

I relate to the women, I hope it feels as though the time is devoid of outside distraction, lending itself to personal and academic growth through learning.

I try to put myself in the women's shoes and think about what I'd want to learn or do if I was incarcerated. Since I like to learn about other cultures, I've invited people from other countries to talk about their lives before coming to Canada. The Saskatchewan Archaeological Society has become involved by having an avocational archaeologist come in to speak to the women about the artifacts and the culture and livelihood of their ancestors. Because of the high aboriginal population, I feel it's very important for the women to learn about something that has been lost to them.

Newspapers are made available daily to the women. In this way, they can be aware of the happenings on the "outside," as well as prepare themselves for some of the changes in society upon their release.

I believe a person cannot begin to learn when her mind is filled with fears and concerns, so I do a lot of listening. Once the women have voiced their concerns, they have the space in their minds to do some learning. When these women were children at school, many of them would have left a violent home and, arriving at school, would have been expected to perform like the rest of the students. All that really was on their mind was the situation at home and their own safety. It's important as educators or tutors to be sensitive to the concerns of our learners and willing to offer each of them what they need to further their education.

Lavera Schiele teaches at Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert.

Stories from Pine Grove

Introduction by Lavera Schiele

What is the effect of violence on education? It's time that this question was asked of society. There are many children in our school systems who are labelled as "hyper," socially retarded, with behavioural problems, etc. We have readiness classes for the children who are unable to function properly in regular classrooms. These children are not "bad kids" as many people believe. They are trying the best that they can to survive. So often they are asking for help through their behaviour.

In the stories that follow, some of the women tell us what they endured as children. They tell us why they couldn't concentrate during class time, why they didn't have time to study for exams, why they came to school hungry or tired. Even though these things happened many years ago, their memories are as clear as though they were in school yesterday.

It is not enough for us simply to read about the lives of these women. We must be willing to listen, see the need, and reach out to help.

By Debbie

I grew up in a very large family of six boys and five girls. Now that I think of it, there was always drinking. But at a young age, I really didn't understand what was going on. I can say today that my dad was an alcoholic and my mother very seldom drank. She was the one that tried to keep the family together. I only remember once my dad hitting my mom, at the time when my mom left him.

I guess there were a lot of problems, but I was too young to understand her reasons for leaving him. We moved to the city with my grandparents.

When I started to drink in school, it was because everyone was doing it. My drinking affected my



school marks a great deal. Then, of course, the drugs came along. I really enjoyed this new high. I started to get into the harder drugs. They started to cost more. In order to support this habit, I started to do illegal things. That's how I came to be behind bars. But I always feel that things that happen to you happen for a reason. My coming to jail made me understand and realize what is important. I know that I have to deal with this disease I have. Also that education is important in today's society.

I'm going to school right now, trying to get my GED 12. If I had a chance to change anything in my life, it would be to finish school. Also, I'm going to tell my children that you need your education.

I want them to be the best they can. At whatever they decide to do.

continued . . .

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING

Stories from Pine Grove *continued*



By Emma

Violence disrupts a child's education in many different areas. First off, a child's mind is not in tune with the surrounding of the school's normal activity. Violence, whether it may be physical or mental, is very destructive for a child. A child has different emotions going through him/her — fear, insecurity, often hunger. A child is unbalanced with these things happening. A child has to be fed to be able to function properly. A child needs to be loved, for the spiritual being of this child breaks down if this need is not taken care of.

At times children are left to fend for themselves in the morning or evening due to parents not at home, or unable to take care of themselves, let alone take care of the children. A child's mind has to adjust to negative vibes at home or even in the school yards.

Children cannot concentrate on school because the home environment is not safe and they're left unloved everyday. We cannot think of these children as being dumb or illiterate because it's never the child's fault that they're unwilling to learn at school. The home environment plays a major part in how the child's education is to progress.

By Donna

I always liked school because it was my escape from home. But we moved a lot so my studies changed a lot. When I turned 10 or 11, I began to skip school; whether out of revenge, boredom or just for attention, I'm not sure. I did well in school so I'm sure it's all there. No one ever asked me if I had a problem at home. To me, it seemed that at least one principal thought I was just a "typical lazy Indian." He didn't like Indians much and me especially.

The things that happened at home like sexual abuse, alcohol abuse and physical abuse are now beginning to heal through a series of self help programs, Healing Circles, and some residential conferences.

There are a number of self help groups in the directory. And you could probably find a Healing Circle through Family Services.

By Marla

When I was between 11 and 17, I was having problems with my adopted mother. There were a lot of problems that we couldn't work out. And during some of those times when we argued, I would get sent to my room and I wouldn't be allowed out for anything but school and to eat. I would get tired of staying in my room, so I ran away. I would go stay at a friend's house, but I'd make sure I'd told my friends to tell my mother, if she called or came to the house, that I was not there.

I'd go to school but I wouldn't be able to concentrate on my school work, I would always be worrying about how much trouble I'd get into when I got home. Sometimes I would skip school just to avoid my mother. But eventually she always found me. There were a couple of times I thought

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING

about suicide but I was never brave enough to go through with it.

My mother was not really violent but she did things to make me scared of her. One time, the only time, she told me to fight her but I didn't want to. My father was sitting on the basement steps watching us; he really didn't do anything, all he said was "Jennifer, leave her alone!" I don't think I will ever forget any of the bad memories that I have of my mother. Sometimes I hate her so much! But what can I do or say?

By Priscilla

I grew up in a home where there was a lot of mental abuse. I feel that it has affected my self-esteem and self worth, throughout my teen years and now in adulthood. My low self-worth, I feel, is shown by my dropping out of school at the age of 16. I am now 25 years old and trying to begin again with my education. I find that an important part of my education is the work and repairing I have been doing with myself, on my self-esteem. The two to me, very much, go together.

By Jocelyn

I remember when I was growing up. I grew up in a violent home, whether it was mentally, physically or sexually. I was only six years old when everything started. When I take time to remember what I did when I was younger, all I could remember are the bad things. Still today, it's hard for me to remember what bothered me most was the sexual abuse. Not only did my stepfather abuse me, but so did my foster father and his friends. Even in school, I had this principal who would sexually harass me. I hate them all. I hated men.

In class, I couldn't concentrate right. The

subjects I took at school were okay but math I hate. Sometimes I wonder why. Maybe it's because my math teacher was the principal. He used to look at me, wink at me, and touch me even if I'd like to walk by; I used to skip his classes. I thought I'd get out of it but when I'd come into class later on, he'd call me to the principal's office, his office. He gave me the creeps all over. I was 14 years old when I first met him. This went on for two years until I finally left elementary school to go to high school. My schooling went right down. I quit when I went to high school. So now I'm back in school and I want to keep going. I'm a lot older now and I'm not going to let no one do this to me again. It affected me so much and I was always afraid. Afraid of anything or anybody.

If you notice anything of a disturbed child, please don't ignore that child. Help him or her. They are the ones who will brighten up our futures, only if we treat them right.



These stories were originally published by the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) in Women's Education, Summer, 1992.

Helping women inmates become lifelong learners

By Marilyn Boechler

Working as a volunteer, I developed this literacy program for incarcerated women at the Gabriel Dumont Institute Community Training Residence (CTR). It is the provincial minimum security facility for women and is located in Saskatoon. The CTR opened in 1989 and houses 14 inmates. Women who want to transfer from Pine Grove in Prince Albert must agree to certain conditions. One requirement is participation in the literacy program.

My involvement with literacy began three years ago when I offered my services as a tutor at the CTR. The residence had been open for a year.



There were no literacy or upgrading programs in the facility. None of the women was attending programs in the community. Prior to coming to the CTR, they had not been attending classes because there was no academic teacher at Pine Grove at the time.

The Elizabeth Fry Society has developed a profile of the typical woman offender.

She

- is less than 30 years of age
- has less than a Grade 10 education
- has been unemployed prior to conviction
- has been married or in a common-law relationship but has separated
- has two or more children

To develop a successful adult education program, I believe it is crucial to start by asking the students what they want to learn and by listening to their responses. They know what they need to learn to help them in their daily lives.

My program evolved as I struggled to develop individualized programs that would meet the women's short- and long-term educational goals. The program had to remain flexible. Students enter or leave the program every week as they are transferred from Pine Grove or are released.

The program includes two two-hour sessions per week. It is delivered by volunteer tutors, all qualified women teachers. There is no placement testing.

The program format is:

- circle check
- journals (dated and signed but not read by tutors)

(A) **Language Arts Group Activity** (using adult reading materials — newspapers, magazines, public health pamphlets, etc.)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING

(B) Targeted Language Skills

- oral reading
- vocabulary development
- critical thinking skills
- discussion skills
- learning from peers
- validation of personal experience
- increased confidence in expressing and defending opinions

(C) Individualized Programs

(D) Constant Positive Reinforcement

The primary purpose of this educational program is not entry into the workforce, although this may be a beneficial outcome. Rather, the program aims to help the women adopt attitudes and gain educational skills that will help them change their lifestyles and become lifelong learners. Another benefit is that they can share these skills with their children.

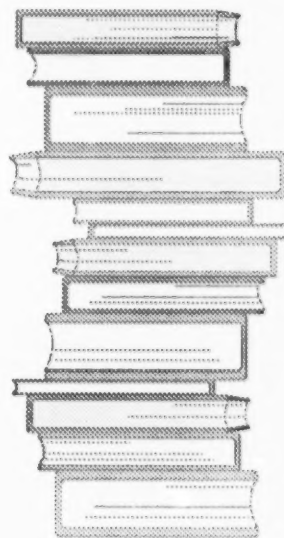
The majority of these women have not been successful in traditional schools. They have low self-esteem and a negative self-image. They do not believe they are capable of academic success.

The tutors talk to each new student about her educational background. Often, we suggest a quick review of basic language, arts and math skills. The students are asked to tell us if the material is too easy or too difficult. This empowers them to make decisions that affect their lives. They feel comfortable and safe. Learning can begin. The women are quick to help each other with assignments. Asking for and receiving help is a very positive experience.

During the past three years, I have become very concerned about the lack of educational opportu-

nities for women incarcerated in the Saskatchewan corrections system. The classroom at Pine Grove is closed during July and August. All academic programs at the CTR have been organized, developed and taught by volunteers. Women are a minority in the corrections system. But they should not be denied educational opportunities equal to those provided for incarcerated men.

Marilyn Boechler retired from teaching in 1990. During her 25 years in the classroom, she taught grades 1-8. She has also worked as a substitute teacher in a K-12 composite school. As a volunteer she has organized, developed and taught the literacy program at the CTR for three years. She presented a paper about this program at the International Conference on Adult Education "Looking at the Learner ... for a Change," held in Saskatoon in April 1993.



MOTHEREAD: Discovering Language, Discovering Yourself

Parent-child prison literacy program empowers women

By Nancye Gaj



Reconsider Me

*Reconsider me because of my ability to walk a straight line, when the roads were rough.
Reconsider me when evil was present in my speech toward you, and I returned to apologize.
Reconsider me when I stole from you but contributed to the needy.
Reconsider me when my past was raggedy and I came forth with rehabilitation.
Reconsider me when you were in prison and I wrote you a letter.
Reconsider me when I prayed for you and a blessing came your way.
Reconsider me for the old, the new, the good, and the bad.*

Engress L. Harris

"Reconsider me" writes Engress Harris, an inmate mother at the North Carolina Correctional Institute for Women. Harris is one of the hundreds of incarcerated women who, over the past seven years in MOTHEREAD classes, have learned to use the power of literacy to express who and what they are. In these classes, literacy skills and social support networks are developed as women learn to be reading role models for their children.

MOTHEREAD made history in January, 1987 when it became the first parent-child literacy program in a correctional facility in the United States. Starting with a one-year grant, part-time staff, and the belief that the desire for a better relationship with their children could motivate inmate mothers to improve their reading and writing skills, MOTHEREAD began with one class

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A BARRIER TO LEARNING

at a maximum security prison. This initial effort has expanded to additional sites and includes follow-up labs and classes for pregnant women. The program serves approximately 300 incarcerated women a year.

MOTHEREAD classes, now conducted in correctional and community settings, are based on carefully-chosen, multi-cultural children's literature and the learner's own life experiences. By sharing stories, parents learn another way of communicating with their children. The stories help parents raise difficult issues with their children and discuss them openly. As parents develop their ability to read and discuss the selected stories, they begin to develop a deeper sense of their own worth and ability. As a result, the women find a voice they have never used before.

This voice is often conveyed through reading and writing, activities many of the women have not traditionally done for themselves. Incarcerated mothers, as a group, have a statistically high rate of illiteracy and their children are more likely to have reading problems.

In spite of the often abusive and difficult backgrounds of the participants, MOTHEREAD takes a non-deficit approach, in which learning is based on the strengths, experiences and skills the women have, instead of focusing on their weaknesses. Students discover that long-held feelings they believed to be theirs alone are, in fact, part of all human experience. For this reason, MOTHEREAD, with grants from the North Carolina Humanities Council and the Z. Smith Reynolds

Foundation, published HomeMade, a writing sampler in which "Reconsider Me" appears. The publication is a collection of short fiction and poems authored by professional North Carolina-based writers and MOTHEREAD students. The collection represents the triumph of dignity, pride, and perseverance of the human spirit in its quest for self-expression.

Whether in or out of prison, developing literacy skills in the context of students' lives enables MOTHEREAD to teach the universality of human experience — provocative, joyous, reflective or tragic. Abolitionist Sojourner Truth, herself illiterate, once said, "I don't read such small stuff as letters — I read men and nations." MOTHEREAD shows that when we read words, we are also reading each other.

For more information contact:

Susan Poorman

Community Education Coordinator

Building 3, Suite 246

4208 Six Forks Road

Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Telephone: (919) 781-2088

Nancye B. Gaj is founder and president of MOTHEREAD, Inc., a private, non-profit family literacy organization based in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Reviews



Taking down the wall of words

Part 1: Community agencies and literacy

Part 2: A handbook for community agencies

Published by The John Howard Society of Canada, 55 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, 1990 and 1991

Review by Janet Drysdale and Mona Nasser

These two booklets written by The John Howard Society of Canada alert us to the problems that people with low literacy skills face every day. Since more than one-third of Canadians do not have the literacy skills they need, these problems urgently need attention. The booklets recognize that community agencies often deal with people who have many problems. The agencies must therefore help in more than one area. Literacy is one way agencies may try to help. Improved literacy helps people gain a measure of control over their lives.

The booklets are aimed at community agencies who want to know how to better serve people with low literacy skills. The reference to the "wall of words" shows how many organizations build barriers that make them inaccessible to people who function at low levels of literacy. Often the barriers exist because of a lack of awareness of the problem. The two booklets provide practical approaches for community agencies to help them break down these barriers.

The booklets suggest ways for agencies to accommodate people with low literacy skills in the services they provide. The aim is to provide services which do not rely as heavily on the written word. This can go much further than making forms simpler to read and complete. For example, the booklets ask community

agencies to rethink the first impression their waiting rooms have on people who come into their offices: are there signs or posters or both? Is there a private area for approaching the receptionist? *Taking Down the Wall of Words* suggests that a receptionist might greet a person with "Would you like me to fill out that form with you or would you prefer to do it yourself?" The authors point out that this approach may initially take more time but will, in the long run, save time and effort. Also, increased accessibility will result in the agency reaching more people with its service, a goal for which many community agencies strive.

The booklets also guide community agencies on how to act as the link between their clientele and literacy programs. They suggest agencies encourage people with low literacy levels to take part in literacy programs. The booklets emphasize the positive. For instance, they encourage agencies to promote upgrading because it is important to recognize that each person has a different level of skill. Most people already have some literacy skills.

Both booklets are readable and concise. They contain a good description of literacy problems with helpful suggestions for community agencies to consider in making themselves more accessible.

Part 2: A Handbook for Community Agencies, fleshes out the information and ideas contained in *Part 1: Community Agencies and Literacy*. For the busy office manager, Part 1 alone provides enough background and suggestions to adapt an office into a more accessible environment.

As we read the booklets, we found ourselves mentally reviewing our own office procedures. We found our own barriers and will certainly try to apply some of the suggestions to take down our own wall of words.

Janet Drysdale and Mona Nasser have backgrounds in law and are currently working with

the Public Legal Education Society of Saskatchewan (PLEA).

PLEA's mandate is to provide information to the public about the law. PLEA produces informational videos as well as pamphlets and newspaper articles on various topics dealing with the law. To reach as many people as possible, most of the material produced by PLEA is written in clear language without the use of legal jargon.

A key to freedom: literacy in the prison system

22-minute video

Produced by Heartland Motion Pictures,
Regina, 1993

Review by Gail Douglas-Brehm

Heartland Motion Pictures of Regina released this quality 22-minute video in February, 1993. The video links literacy skills with self-esteem and the ability to function in the prison environment and in society as a whole. Clips of inmate-tutors and learners who are part of the literacy program at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre in Saskatchewan show clearly that the program builds a sense of accomplishment and, perhaps more importantly, a sense of fellowship.

The literacy program is based within the prison community. Many learners become tutors. Karen Dvorak (Literacy Coordinator at the P.A. Correctional Centre) describes the program as "...a process of turning from inward, outward and then giving back to the community." One of the tutor-inmates says "To give away what you've learned is the greatest gift of all." Another says "We are comfortable with this program. We have been [through this]." The program is described by both inmates and staff at the Correctional Centre as a safe place to go where an inmate can take risks and admit to himself and to others that he needs help.

It is emphasized in the video that literacy is not only about books, but

about life itself. "The biggest thing with this and related programs is that they start to think ... maybe I can do this," says Bernice Sayese (Board of Directors, Prince Albert Indian and Metis Friendship Centres). Sayese also identifies the need for community agencies and literacy programs to work cooperatively, in the interests of those involved with the literacy program.

The inmates interviewed appear to be of aboriginal Canadian ancestry. The production quality of the video is high, and the presentation very effective.

Prices (which do not include taxes) are as follows:

Private use	\$ 49.95
Institutional use, limited Public Performance Rights (PPR) (within Institution, non-loan)	99.95
Institutional use, full PPR, loanable	249.95
Shipping charge (per cassette)	4.95

*Gail Douglas-Brehm is
Learning Centre Supervisor at
the Regina Public Library.*

Reading the legal world: literacy and justice in Canada

Published by the Canadian Bar
Association Task Force Report, 1992
77 pages (English). 82 pages (French).

Review by Sandra Hornung

The law and legal information are almost all written and written in a manner that is peculiar to the legal system. This type of information intimidates many adults.



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continued . . .

especially those with limited literacy. These adults do not feel that lawyers and the legal system are there to help them.

These are the findings of a Task Force established in 1990 by the Canadian Bar Association. The Task Force was to examine how the law serves adults with limited reading skills, to determine what help is available from existing community groups, to educate the legal community about the issues and to recommend solutions.

The 26 recommendations suggest what various players in the legal community may do to make the law more accessible to adults with limited literacy. The legal community includes the Canadian Bar Association, lawyers, law societies, law foundations and other funding agencies, public legal education agencies and governments. As with most recommendations, these all contain the word "should" and do not provide any commitment from these groups to carry out the recommendations. In addition, the Task Force does not provide for any follow-up to monitor if any groups actually do carry out the recommendations.

The book does not provide practical help for the literacy practitioner or the adult with limited literacy. The list of references and the book itself are excellent sources of current research about the lack of access to legal information for people with limited literacy. The recommendations are an excellent source for people in the legal community who are committed to remedy the problem. The list of legal information services available in each province may be useful to anyone who does not have this information.

Sandra Hornung is the former executive director of the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan. She is currently completing a Masters of Library Science at the University of Western Ontario.

New resources

Tutor Training and Certification

Information: The Literacy Coordinators of Alberta is developing a computer-based training program for literacy workers entitled STAPLE (Standardized Training for Alberta Practitioners in Literacy Education). Contact Pat Campbell for information at (403) 430-0568.

The Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) is developing a curriculum for women in literacy. Watch for a call for curriculum writers in early March. CCLOW will also be publishing three books in March "The Power of Woman-positive Literacy Work," "Women in Literacy Speak," and "Listen to Women in Literacy." The first two books are written for workers, researchers and policy-makers; the third book is for literacy students. CCLOW will also soon be publishing Fact Sheets on women and literacy.

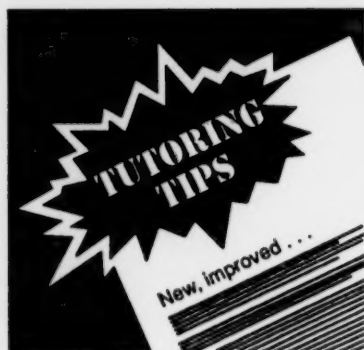
"We Make the Road by Walking"

Bell, B. et al, Ed. Temple University Press (1990). Conversations on education and social change between Myles Horton and Paulo Freire, internationally renowned educators. An essential read for all literacy practitioners and policymakers.

Cost \$24.95. Available from: One Sky, 136 Ave. F S. Saskatoon, Sask. S7M 1S8. Telephone: (306) 652-1571.

"Kinistin Stories": A wonderful collection of writings and illustrations by learners on the James Smith reserve in Saskatchewan. To order call Grant at (306) 862-9833.





The conversation tree

By Gregory Hadley

People who have travelled abroad, or spoken with a recent immigrant who may have studied English in his or her native country, may have had the following type of conversation inflicted upon them:

Interrogator: What is your Name?

You: John Smith.

Interrogator: Where are you from?

You: I'm from Nova Scotia.

Interrogator: What are your hobbies?

You: I like rugby. How about you?

Interrogator: What is your favourite food?

Many students become so accustomed to the typical question/answer dialogue mode taught in a large number of textbooks that they naturally carry it over into their conversations. After using up their supply of stock questions, the conversation abruptly ends. When I first started teaching in Japan, I found that a large number of my students could do fine while reading dialogues, but the second I asked them to put their books away they were speechless.

I developed this technique with the goal of getting my students to talk in class. The Conversation Tree is actually a semi-guided dialogue disguised as a game. I use it with upper-level beginners or intermediates who are developing some proficiency with English communicative functions such as Greetings (G), Questions (Q), Answers (A), Sharing Personal Information (S), Starting to Close a

Conversation (SC), or Concluding (C), but have problems maintaining a prolonged conversation. The students should know how to perform these communicative functions to some degree before trying this activity. This game works well with classes of four to 20 who all speak the same native language, but works even better with classes of mixed language groups.

To play the game, you will need a sheet with a drawing of the Conversation Tree, plenty of counters (coloured cardboard from bingo games works best for me) and a stopwatch or hourglass. Have the students pair up, and give each pair a game board. I usually paste my copies of the Conversation Tree onto poster board and then laminate them.

If you have studied any special grammar structure or vocabulary in your lesson, have the students write these on a piece of yellow sticky paper and stick them on the roots labelled "Grammar" and "Vocabulary." Ask the students to try to use these items during the game. Have the students write down one of their goals for learning English. They will stick it over the "Motivation" root.

Assign different point values for the communicative functions. For example, "G" (Greeting) might be worth three points, while "Q" (Question) and "A" (Answer) might be worth two points. It is better to make the more difficult

continued . . .

The conversation tree *continued*

communicative functions worth more points. Explain that the goal of this game is to climb as many branches of the tree as possible within the time limit. The people who speak the most will get the most points.

Let one person in each of the pairs decide who will start the conversation. Set a stopwatch for about three to four minutes. I use an hourglass because the students can easily see how much time they have left. Give them two rounds of three to four minutes each. I give my classes a time limit so, instead of fretting over a word that is just on the tip of their tongue, they will be motivated to work around this by selecting a different word. This helps maintain the flow of the conversation.

As the students speak, they cover up the communicative function they have just completed with a counter. After reaching the top of one branch, they do not go over the greeting section again, but only need to start with another question (directly above the Greeting) and begin climbing another branch. At the end of the time limit for the first round, the teams count up their points. Write the results on the board. During the second round, the other member of each pair will start. At the end of the second round, tally the points again. The pair with the most points at the end of the second round wins.

Survey study

I administered an informal survey after using this game in several of my conversation classes at the Niigata English Language School, a technical college on the west coast of Japan. Our classes are kept quite small, usually four to eight

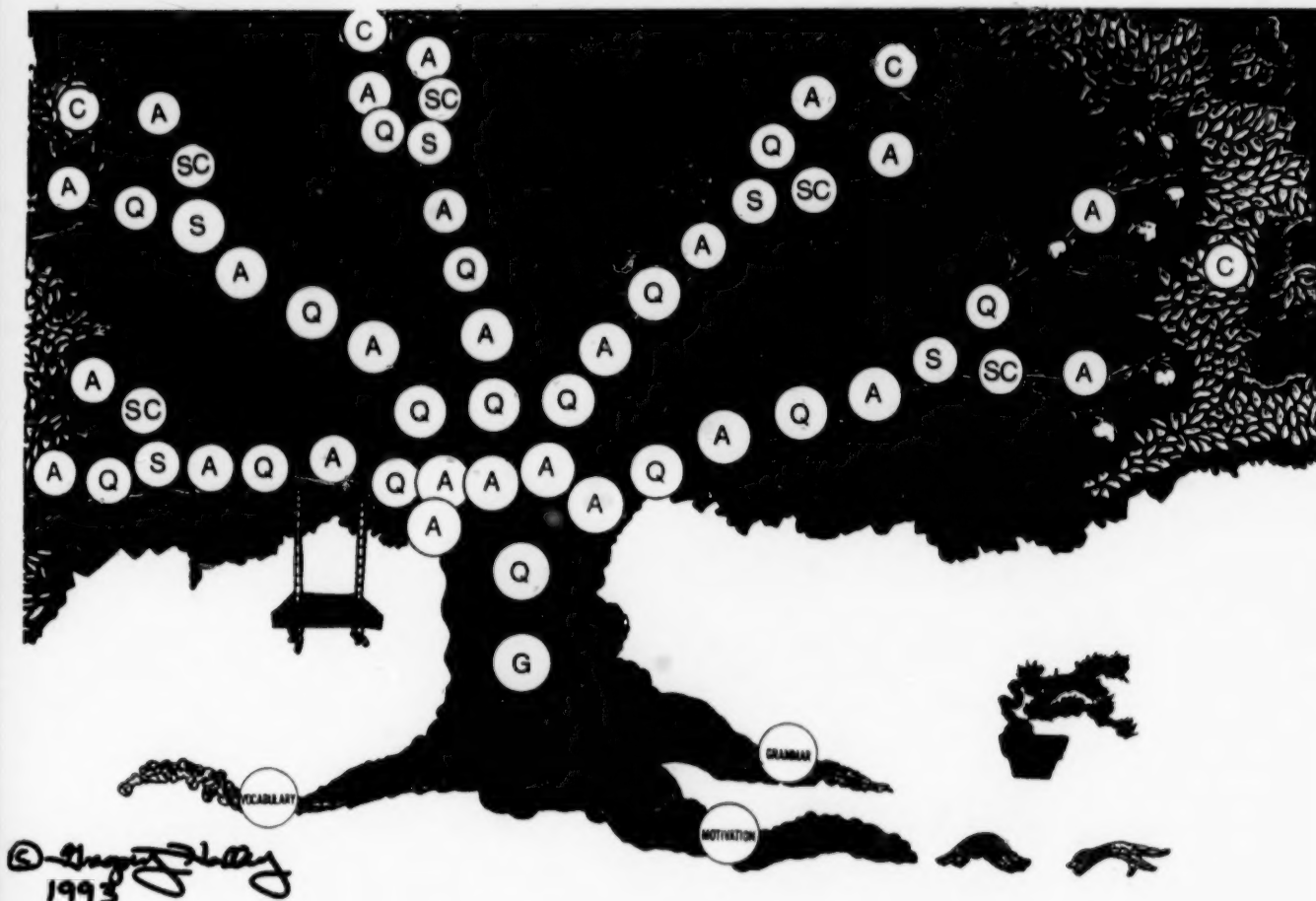
students per class. I surveyed 33 students, 30 females and three males, ranging from ages 15 to 55. I asked them if they liked the game, and if they felt it was helpful to their study of English. I also left a section open for comments about why they liked or disliked the game.

Twenty-four percent of those who responded said they liked the game very much, while 57 percent said they liked the game. Nine percent said they had no opinion, while three percent mildly disliked the game. When asked if they felt this game was helpful in learning English, 51 percent said they agreed strongly, while 31 percent said they agreed. Twelve percent had no opinion.

Some comments from those who liked the game were: "It is good practice for studying English conversation. English conversation textbooks are boring." Another student said, "If I don't think of the answers in a few seconds, I can't win. It is really hard, but very nice practice for conversation." Comments among those who did not like the game were, "I used the same words," or "The time to speak was too short." Particularly the last comment shows a turnaround in this student, who wants more time to speak English!

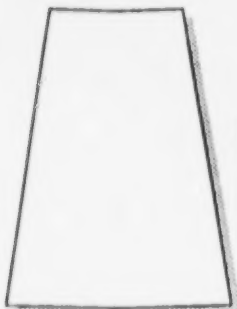
Classroom observations

It sometimes takes a couple of tries before students get the hang of this game. Once they do, the classroom becomes alive with conversation. In some classes, after using this technique a couple of times, I have seen even some of my shyest students toss aside the game board and continue talking on in English. Ultimately, this is my goal. The Conversation Tree



is in many ways like training wheels. When this happens, I let the students continue. Afterwards I praise the students for their accomplishments. I tell them they have begun to master this technique. From then on, we have our free conversations without using the game board or timer. Many students find new-found confidence in discovering they can speak for five to ten minutes unsupervised in English, and have no problems with engaging in simple conversations.

Gregory Hadley is the Head Teacher at the Niigata English Language School in Niigata, Japan. He has been teaching ESL/Literacy in Japan and the United States for over five years.



REGIONAL REPORTS

Cumberland Regional College, Tisdale

By Grant Wilson

The Literacy Program has grown steadily this year. Our participation statistics as of December 31, 1993 are:

	Working	Waiting	Totals
Tutors	54	62	116
Learners	75	15	90

The College is also undertaking two National Literacy Secretariat funded projects.

The James Smith Tutor Training Project

This project is taking place at the James Smith Reserve, northeast of Melfort. Participants are training to become basic skills tutors so that they can help others on the reserve and elsewhere to improve their basic reading and writing skills in the future.

Literacy Handbooks Project

This project will produce three handbooks meant to help learners improve their reading in the areas of workplace literacy, basic money handling and using bank accounts.

Grant Wilson is Manager, Communications and Literacy Programs at Cumberland Regional College in Tisdale.

South East Regional College, Weyburn

Ten representatives from seven different agencies attended a meeting on January 20. The Métis Society, Shared Services, South East Education, Regional College, Regional Library Social Services and a day care were represented. Over 30 other agencies were invited and several others expressed their regrets at not being able to attend.

Four topics were discussed:

1. Family Literacy — there was unanimous support for starting programs.
2. Aboriginal Literacy — the group felt that direct contact should be made with band councils and societies to discuss their needs.
3. How to provide programs which encourage participation in spite of the barrier of low self-esteem which many literacy students feel.
4. How to improve communication between literacy staff and other agencies.

Literacy Coordinator Nancy Smoliak commented that there was a lot of similarity between the issues and concerns raised in the Weyburn meeting and that in Yorkton. She said that "native literacy will need a large amount of focus in the development phase."

Congratulations South East on a successful event!

Thanks to Nancy Smoliak for providing the information for this report.

Cypress Hills Community College, Swift Current

After many days of work, and with 40 people scheduled to attend the Interagency Forum in Swift Current on January 15, the event was cancelled at the last minute because of the blizzard warning. Staff at Cypress Hills College are now trying to reschedule the event.

Regina City Regional College

The Regina Literacy Association has scheduled an interagency meeting on Saturday, March 12. This will provide an opportunity to discuss common issues and to begin building partnerships. Let's hope that the Saskatchewan winter has worn itself out by that time!

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In the last two issues of Literacy Works, we have run reports from the regional colleges and will try to make these a regular feature in future issues. If your region has not yet submitted a report, or if something new and exciting has happened since your last report, please let us know your news.*



NETWORK NEWS

Board update

The Board has begun to develop 1994-95 project proposals and a plan of action for the upcoming year. The Literacy Program committee has been asked to submit comments and ideas to the office. The planning process is several months ahead of where it was in previous years.

Changes to cost-shared funding eligibility in Saskatchewan

In 1989, the Saskatchewan Literacy Council (since disbanded) decided that access to this funding would be limited to the nine regional colleges, four SIAST campuses, READ Saskatoon and Regina Public Library. Saskatchewan is the only province to have such a restricted funding policy.

The National Literacy Secretariat and Saskatchewan Education want to make this funding available to community groups while ensuring that the expertise

of existing literacy programs plays an important part in literacy activities in the province. A special meeting was held in Regina in February to discuss the eligibility and the review process. Watch for more information in future Network publications.

On Our Way doing great!

The Board of Directors commends *On Our Way* Editor Wanda Hurren for the excellent job she is doing on the paper. The appearance of the paper has improved greatly thanks to Wanda's expertise, the support of Apex Graphics (Saskatoon) and the *Regina Leader-Post*.

Network resources

In December, the Network finally produced the first edition of a bibliography of office resources. We are currently adding new materials which have come in since August and students from the Library Technician program will be helping with the cataloguing. We will
continued . . .

begin annotating the listings so that we can print a more useful bibliography. The first bibliography has just been revised and reprinted. A number of people have borrowed books from the office.

Pizza Hut Christmas Wishes Program

Thanks to the efforts of Pizza Hut staff and STN publicity, a large number of good quality books were donated throughout the province. Special thanks to the literacy programs which sorted and distributed the books and to Carol Michaels and other members of the Saskatoon Literacy Coalition who sorted the books in Saskatoon. In Regina, thanks to Pizza Hut, Saskatchewan Reading Council, Regina Literacy Association and Wayne Kuss of the *Leader-Post*. Not only did the Christmas Wishes program provide books to needy programs, but it also gave the Network and the Saskatchewan Reading Council welcome publicity.

SASK. LITERACY FOUNDATION NEWS

The Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation is pleased to announce its grant allocations. At this time, the Foundation has approved grants totalling \$73,930.10 for distribution between:

- Carlton Trail Regional College
- One Sky
- Palliser Institute
- Radius Tutoring
- Regina Home Economics for Living Project
- Saskatoon Police Service (Riversdale)
- Menno Home
- AMGITS Community Involvement Association (North Battleford)
- South Saskatchewan Reading Council
- The Prince Albert Literacy Network

Foundation members are:

Dennis Ball, Regina (President)
Amber MacLeod (Saskatoon)
Joan Bernston, (Saskatoon)
Earle Robertson (Saskatoon)
Bill Clarke (Regina)
Robin Stonehouse (Regina)
Murray Hunter (Regina)
Nayda Veerman (Saskatoon)
Lester Lafond (Saskatoon)

The Network is now providing administrative services to the Foundation.

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

"Family Literacy: the Foundation for Strengthening a Nation" — The third National US Conference on Family Literacy, May 1-3, 1994, Louisville, Kentucky. The conference has three main strands: Research, Practice and Policy.

Family Literacy; a Partnership. (working title) Saskatoon, September 30 to October 1, 1994. A provincial conference featuring presenters from across Canada and the US co-sponsored by Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. One conference session will be narrowcast (available to reception sites only) with live interaction; other sessions will be taped for broadcast in a Family Literacy series.

The First National Canadian Family Literacy Conference, Ottawa, November 2 to 4, 1994.

World Adult Education Association meeting is scheduled for September 15 to 21, 1994 in Cairo, Egypt. The theme is "Women, Literacy and Development." For information contact the International Council for Adult Education in Toronto, (416) 588-1211.

Back issues of *Literacy Works* available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for \$5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

Vol. 1, No. 2	Computers and Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 1	Women and Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 2	Plain Language
Vol. 3, No. 4	Special Issue on Literacy Resources
Vol. 4, No. 1	New Canadians and Literacy
Vol. 4, No. 2	Literacy and Learning Disabilities
Vol. 4, No. 3	Update Issue
Vol. 4, No. 4	Native Education and Literacy
Vol. 5, No. 1	Literacy and International Development
Vol. 5, No. 2	Youth and Literacy

If you have comments on any of the articles in this issue of **Literacy Works**, we'd be happy to hear them. Please send letters to:



Jerry Horne, Editor

c/o Birdsong Communications

806 Victoria Avenue

Regina, Sask. S4T 2R3

Compliments of
Sask. Literacy Network

LITERACY W • O • R • K • S

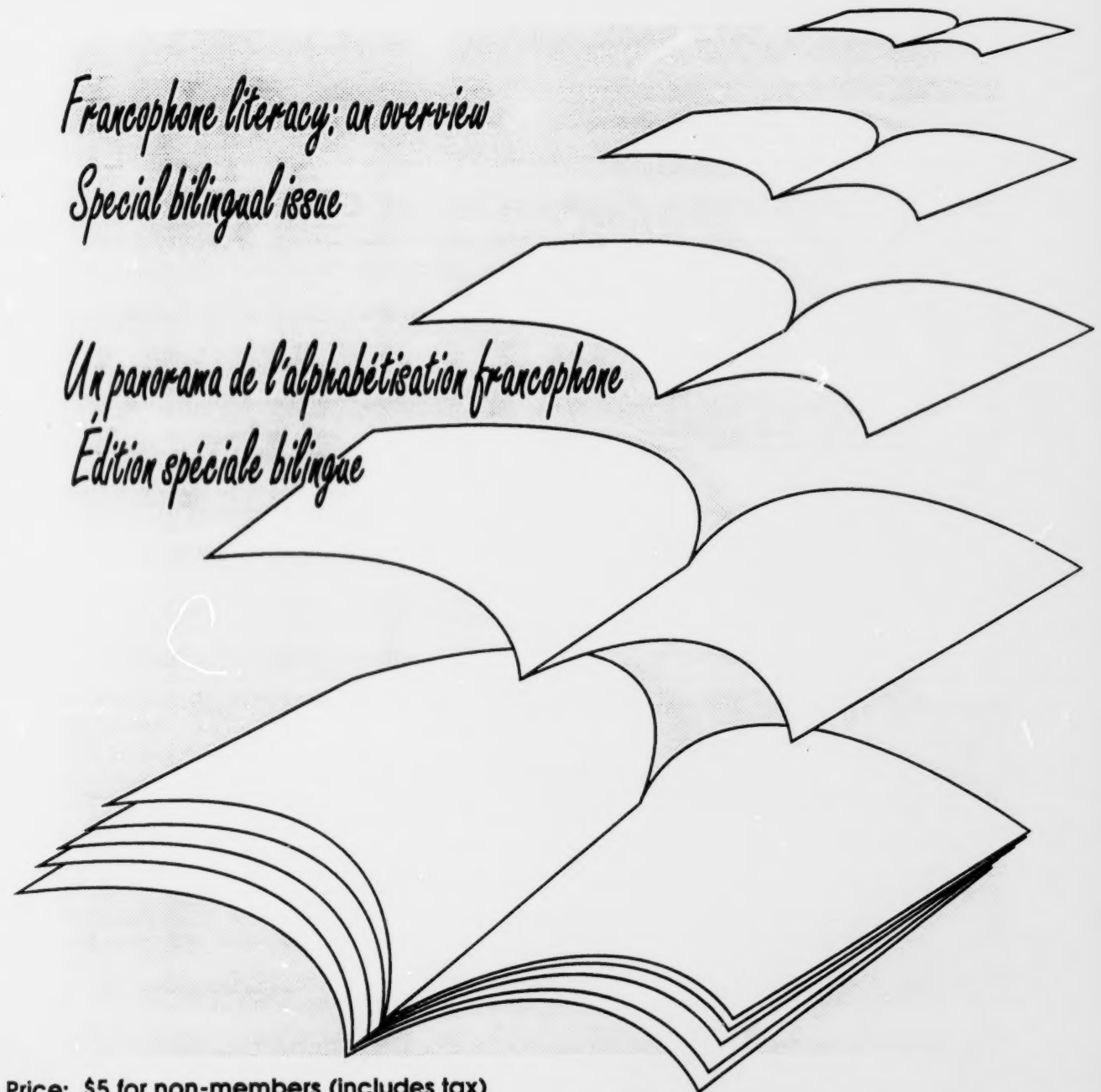
Vol. 5, No. 4

A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network

Summer 1994

Francophone literacy: an overview
Special bilingual issue

Un panorama de l'alphabétisation francophone
Édition spéciale bilingue



Price: \$5 for non-members (includes tax)

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The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to

*Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S4T 2R3*

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without premission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178.



Coming up in Literacy Works

Fall '94:

Family Literacy
(Deadline: June 15)

Winter '94-95:

Mother Tongue Literacy
(Deadline: October 15)

Saskatchewan Literacy Network (le Réseau de l'alphabétisation de la Saskatchewan) a été établi en septembre 1989. Il est une coalition de groupes et d'individus oeuvrant en alphabétisation. *Literacy Works* est une publication tri-mensuelle centrée sur divers aspects de l'alphabétisation.

Le Network reconnaît l'appui du ministère de Multiculturalisme et de Citoyenneté canadienne.

Les idées exprimées dans cette publication ne sont pas nécessairement celles du conseil du Saskatchewan Literacy Network ni du comité du journal.

Nous acceptons les contributions et les réponses des apprenants/es, des intervenants/es ou toute autre personne intéressée à l'alphabétisation. Nous nous réservons le droit de rédiger les articles. Néanmoins, les principaux changements seront discutés au préalable avec l'auteur. Faites parvenir vos articles et lettres à l'adresse suivante:

*Saskatchewan Literacy Network, C.P. 1520,
Saskatoon (Saskatchewan), S7K 3R5.*

Les articles de *Literacy Works* peuvent être copiés sans autorisation. La reconnaissance de la source, *Literacy Works*, serait appréciée.

Pour tout autre renseignement, appelez le Saskatchewan Literacy Network au (306) 653-7368 ou 653-7178.

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Editorial - A few good reasons to learn in French

by Yvon Laberge

Jean spoke French when he was a kid growing up in rural Alberta. He spoke French all the time at home. All his neighbors spoke French. Sunday service was in French, the local grocer spoke French, everyone spoke French at the community fair. When Jean went to school he studied in English, just like his Mom and Dad. He quit school after grade nine to work on the farm. Jean can speak French but is illiterate in both languages.

Times are hard on the farm for Jean. He can't seem to make ends meet since the price of beef fell. Jean has been farming all his life so he doesn't think he can get another type of job. There are subsidies available to Jean to encourage him to diversify his crops. His neighbor told him about it but he doesn't pursue it because he finds it too much of a hassle to fill out the forms.

Both of Jean's kids are in school now. They go to a French immersion school because he thinks it is important for them to learn his mother tongue. He has a hard time helping his kids with school work. Jean has expressed recently that he would like to learn to read and to write so he can help his kids in school.

Jean's story is similar to most illiterate people living in rural areas in Western Canada. The main difference is that he speaks French. Should he learn in English or in French? What may motivate him to learn to read and to write in English? These are a few of the questions to be explored in this short article.

Literacy programs in French

Francophone literacy activities started in Western Canada in the late 1980s. It is the contention of many practitioners that when their students study in French, they simultaneously improve their English reading and writing skills. The opposite is not true. Then, even if the person wishes to acquire literacy skills to get a job, to write cheques or to access information to help on the farm, training in French is advantageous because both languages will be learned.

The minority French language has been devalued for many years in Western Canada. In a similar way as with the natives, after two or three generations of marginalization there seems to be a renewal of interest in one's

language and culture. Like Jean, there is an expressed need to teach the kids about their heritage. Literacy training in French must take this important consideration into account. It must contribute to a deepening of the cultural identity and language of the person. Two important elements must be integrated into the literacy curriculum: every opportunity must be made to value the cultural identity of the individual, and the history and heritage of the individual must be emphasized. Learning the language is the best way to achieve both. Language is the important catalyst which helps to understand yourself and your world.

The literacy activities should also be developed in the learner's community. The community is the center of his support and the source of his conflicts. By acquiring literacy skills in one's own language the socio-cultural realities of the community are defined. As the definitions are developed so is an understanding of the community. When one understands his community he is better positioned to change it. Literacy therefore encourages participation within one's own community. It provides an opportunity to redress some of the factors which contributed to the marginalization of the learner's culture and language.

Conclusion

Should Jean learn to read and write in his own language? Absolutely! He has nothing to lose. While learning in French he will also learn English. Jean will also develop more confidence in himself as he understands his culture and language, and how it relates to his community. As he gains this understanding he will be more inclined to support what he likes and contribute to change what he doesn't like. Jean can offer a better community to his kids and teach them to understand and appreciate their heritage.

Yvon Laberge is a consultant with HOPE Learning Systems in Edmonton. He is also provincial coordinator for the francophone literacy program in Alberta.

Quelques bonnes raisons d'apprendre en français

par Yvon Laberge

Jean parlait français lorsqu'il était enfant et qu'il vivait à la campagne en Alberta. Il parlait toujours en français. Le dimanche, le service religieux se faisant en français, l'épicier du coin parlait français, et tout le monde parlait français au marché public. Lorsque Jean alla à l'école, il étudia, tout comme son père et sa mère, en anglais. Il quitta l'école après sa neuvième année pour aller travailler sur une ferme. Aujourd'hui, Jean parle français mais il est analphabète dans les deux langues.

Pour Jean, les temps sur la ferme furent difficiles. Il avait du mal à joindre les deux bouts car le prix du boeuf avait chuté. Puisque Jean avait travaillé toute sa vie sur une ferme, il ne pensait pas qu'il pouvait occuper un autre genre d'emploi. Il existe des subventions pour encourager Jean à diversifier ses cultures. Son voisin lui en avait parlé, mais il n'y avait pas donné suite car selon lui c'était trop compliqué de remplir les formulaires.

Les deux enfants de Jean vont maintenant à l'école. Jean les envoie à l'école d'immersion en français car il croit que c'est important qu'ils apprennent sa langue maternelle. Il a eu de la difficulté à aider ses enfants dans leurs travaux scolaires. Jean a récemment souligné qu'il aimerait apprendre à lire et à écrire de manière à pouvoir aider ses enfants à l'école.

L'histoire de Jean est semblable à celle de la plupart des gens analphabètes vivant dans les régions rurales de l'Ouest canadien. La grande différence c'est qu'il parle français. Devrait-il étudier en anglais ou en français? Qu'est-ce qui peut le motiver à apprendre à lire et à écrire en français? Ce sont quelques-unes des questions qui seront abordées dans ce court article.

Programmes d'alphabétisation en français

Les activités reliées à l'alphabétisation des francophones ont débuté dans l'Ouest canadien à la fin des années 80. Nombre d'enseignants ont affirmé que lorsque leurs élèves étudiaient en français, ils amélioraient du même coup leurs aptitudes à lire et à écrire en anglais. L'inverse n'est pas vrai. Alors, même si une personne souhaite apprendre à lire et à écrire dans le but d'obtenir un emploi, de pouvoir remplir des chèques ou d'avoir accès à de l'information pour aider aux travaux

de la ferme, les cours de français sont intéressants car on y apprend les deux langues. La langue de la minorité francophone a longtemps été dévalorisée dans l'Ouest canadien. Il semble, qu'après deux ou trois générations de marginalisation, un phénomène semblable à celui que l'on observe chez les autochtones se produit : les gens s'intéressent de nouveau à leur langue et leur culture. Tout comme Jean, on ressent le besoin de transmettre aux jeunes l'héritage qu'on a reçu. Les cours d'alphabétisation en français doivent tenir compte de cette donnée essentielle. Ces cours doivent amener l'individu à renforcer son identité culturelle et à approfondir les connaissances de sa langue. Deux éléments importants doivent faire partie intégrante du processus d'alphabétisation : on doit profiter de toutes les occasions possibles pour valoriser l'identité culturelle de l'individu, de plus, on doit mettre en valeur son vécu et son héritage culturel. L'apprentissage de la langue est la meilleure façon d'y arriver. La langue joue un rôle primordial dans le processus de compréhension de soi et du monde qui nous entoure.

Des activités reliées à l'alphabétisation devraient également se dérouler au sein même de la communauté de l'apprenant. La communauté constitue son principal pilier et la source de ses tiraillements. En apprenant à lire et à écrire dans sa propre langue, l'élève arrive à définir les réalités socio-culturelles de sa communauté. L'élaboration de définitions sous-tend une compréhension de la communauté. Lorsqu'un individu comprend sa communauté, il est plus en mesure d'y apporter des changements. L'alphabétisation encourage donc les gens à jouer un rôle actif dans leur communauté. De plus, elle offre l'occasion de s'attaquer à certains des facteurs qui contribuent à la marginalisation de la culture et de la langue de l'élève.

Conclusion

Jean devrait-il apprendre à lire et à écrire dans sa propre langue? Absolument! Il n'a rien à perdre. En étudiant en français, il apprendra également l'anglais. Au fur et à

Quelques bonnes raisons d'apprendre en français (suite)

mesure qu'il comprendra sa culture et sa langue, et comment ces éléments sont reliés à sa communauté, il gagnera de l'assurance. Avec le temps, il sera plus enclin à défendre les choses qu'il aime et à contribuer au changement des choses qu'il n'aime pas. Jean peut offrir une meilleure communauté à ses enfants et leur apprendre à comprendre et à

apprécier leur héritage culturel.

Yvon Laberge est conseiller auprès de HOPE Learning Systems Ltd. à Edmonton. Il est également coordonnateur provincial du Programme d'alphabétisation des francophones en Alberta.

Francophone community plays important role in literacy

A message from the president, Saskatchewan Literacy Network

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the *Saskatchewan Literacy Network*, I am pleased to recognize the contribution of the Saskatchewan Francophone community in the delivery of adult literacy in their official language. This contribution is highlighted by the many projects and initiatives which are described in this special bilingual issue of *Literacy Works*.

The *Saskatchewan Literacy Network* is pleased to encourage a sharing of information

and the development of cooperative partnerships which will create greater public awareness of francophone literacy issues in the province. The end result of this collaboration is the provision of literacy programming which better meets the needs of all adult learners in Saskatchewan.

*E. Duane Rose,
President, Saskatchewan Literacy Network*

La communauté francophone joue un rôle important dans l'alphabétisation

le message du président, Saskatchewan Literacy Network

Au nom du Conseil d'administration du *Saskatchewan Literacy Network*, il me fait plaisir de reconnaître la contribution de la communauté francophone de la Saskatchewan dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation d'une langue officielle. Ces contributions sont mises en évidence par les nombreux projets et initiatives décrits dans ce numéro bilingue du journal *Literacy Works*.

Le *Saskatchewan Literacy Network* a un intérêt vif de pourvoir le pont de communication nécessaire pour partager de

l'information, développer des partenariats coopératifs, et bâtir des associations qui créent une plus grande conscientisation du grand public au sujet de l'alphabétisation chez les francophones en Saskatchewan. Le résultat final de cette collaboration étant de fournir la programmation en alphabétisation qui répond mieux aux besoins des apprenants adultes de la Saskatchewan.

*E. Duane Rose,
Président, Saskatchewan Literacy Network*

Family & Community

Partners in Literacy and Language Learning

A dynamic provincial conference is being planned to give business and community partners, administrators, policy makers, and practitioners a powerful tool to tackle today's literacy problems – let's celebrate partnerships that can break the cycle of illiteracy.

this conference will:

inform you on critical issues in the why, what and how of family literacy

guide you to solutions to intergenerational illiteracy by sharing proven preschool, integrated, community, cross-cultural, and "home-grown" approaches

inspire you through powerful dialogue with the professionals who have been able to make a difference through effective family literacy programs

provide you with materials and strategies

The Family Literacy Conference welcomes speakers and workshop leaders from across North America including:

- The Honourable Joyce Fairbairn, Minister with special responsibilities for Literacy.
- Bob Spillman, from the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, Kentucky.
- Mary Gordon from the Parenting Office, Toronto Board of Education.
- Barbara Bate from the University College of the Fraser Valley in Chilliwack.
- Lise deVilliers with the Open Book Project in Kingston, Ontario.
- Judith Kiley, Project Coordinator of the Toyota Families for Learning Family Literacy Program, Rochester, New York.
- Johnny Abeyta, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Na'Neelzhiin Ji Olta-Torreon Day School, New Mexico.
- author of the "Parents as Reading Partners" program, Prince Edward Island Literacy Alliance
- "Homespun" family literacy program in Alberta, Medicine Hat Community College
- English as a Second Language
- A panel of business and community leaders who have embraced family literacy with commitment.

Maximum access to experts

Workshops, corporate panel discussions, continuous video showings, an exhibitor area, networking/social time, and plenary sessions promise to deliver.

Be part of the celebration of exciting partnerships in literacy and language learning.

For more information contact: Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Box 1520, Saskatoon, Sk S7K 3R5. Telephone: (306) 653-7368. Facsimile: (306) 933-6490



Prince Albert's French community - returning to our roots / La communauté francophone de Prince Albert - un retour à la source

by Janice Thomas Gervais

The literacy program in this community has an added twist. Before the participants embark on the project of improving reading and writing skills, they feel a need to sharpen their oral skills. Most participants in our regular weekly sessions were at one time fully functional in their first language -- French. Tradition had it that the language was kept alive orally.

Once away from the family home, even that oral tradition was lost or laid stagnant by younger francophones. Those involved in our literacy program come seeking, first and foremost, the oral language upgrading to remain functional in their mother tongue. The majority of our participants have had no formal training in French because school in Saskatchewan, up to a few years ago, meant learning in English. The natural progression is to integrate reading and writing material into our sessions as a tool for total language acquisition.

In the past three years that the program has been running in Prince Albert, 12 people

have participated in one or two of our weekly sessions. With the support of the French adult education office, Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes, independent groups are formed throughout the province. Our groups meet at the French community centre where we are away from a school context and can promote activities geared to real-life situations. Active participation is the key element in our program in order to enhance total integration of the newly acquired skills. Once a certain level of confidence is attained, participants often feel great personal satisfaction which translates into becoming more involved in the French community. After all, the language and culture are still very much part of their identity.

The following two articles are testimonials of women involved in the literacy program for three or more sessions.

Janice Thomas Gervais is a Literacy Instructor for Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes

Joanne Gaudet

I decided to learn to read, write and calculate better in French for my own benefit and because of my family. My husband, Keith, is francophone also and my daughter goes to French school, so I wanted to improve my own language skills. The other two children at home speak French as well and I felt the need to improve my own vocabulary in order to teach them well.

I have participated in four literacy sessions in the past three years. My goal was to speak better and learn grammar as well as getting to know other people in the same situation. Each session was eight to 10 weeks in duration and once a week for a total of 20 hours. So far, I've done 80 hours. I think I have improved my spoken French and I feel more confident than before.

My life has recently changed because of this improvement in my maternal language skills. I am now the French preschool instructor in Domremy. Now I feel more comfortable answering questions in French, especially on

Joanne Gaudet

J'ai décidé de mieux parler, mieux lire, écrire et compter en français pour moi-même et à cause de ma famille. Mon mari, Keith, est francophone aussi et ma fille allait à l'école en français donc je voulais améliorer ma langue. Mes deux enfants à la maison parlaient français aussi, donc je voulais pouvoir leur enseigner des mots corrects.

J'ai déjà participé à quatre sessions d'alphabétisation depuis trois ans. Mon but était de mieux parler et apprendre la grammaire ainsi que de parler avec d'autres personnes dans le même bateau. Chaque atelier de français était une fois par semaine et durait de huit à dix semaines pour un total de vingt heures par session. Donc, j'ai fait quatre-vingt heures en tout. Je pense que j'ai amélioré mon parler et je me sens plus en confiance en français qu'autrefois.

Ma vie a changé dernièrement parce que j'ai accepté de faire la prématernelle dans mon village. Je suis animatrice pour le programme français. Maintenant, je suis plus à l'aise pour

the phone, so I find myself communicating more and more in French in my community. With a larger vocabulary, I feel more competent helping my daughter with her homework and helping the children in the preschool program.

Particularly, I can help my children at home learn the right words and live in French.

Joanne Gaudet is a participant in Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes since 1991. She lives in Domrémy, a small francophone village, with her husband and three children. She is presently an instructor for the French preschool.

This text is an excerpt of what was submitted as a nomination for the Francophone Literacy Award for 1994.

français. Maintenant, je suis plus à l'aise pour répondre aux questions en français au téléphone, donc je parle plus avec des francophones de ma communauté. Mon vocabulaire est plus grand, alors ça aide pour faire les devoirs avec ma fille et à l'école avec les enfants. Surtout, ça aide à savoir les bons mots pour montrer à mes autres enfants toujours à la maison.

Joanne Gaudet est apprenante en alphabétisation/réappropriation de la langue depuis 1991. Elle habite Domrémy, petit village francophone, avec son mari et ses trois enfants. Elle est présentement animatrice de la prématernelle française.

Ceci est un extrait du texte écrit dans le cadre du concours Le prix de la francophonie en alphabétisation.

Therese Jelinski

A few years ago, the importance of my French heritage became stronger to me when I realized that because I no longer heard or spoke French on a regular basis, I was losing my ability to communicate in my mother tongue. I enrolled in French classes at the local college and last year began my participation in the French literacy course. Being part of this class (as well as being in the local French choir) helps me to feel connected to my Francophone roots. With a father who was raised in France, a mother of French Canadian background, and many French-speaking relatives, I grew up (in Saskatchewan) hearing the French language on a daily basis and enjoying the French Canadian traditions such as the "reveillon" after Midnight Mass, complete with tourtières. In high school, and later at university in Ottawa, I took French classes to maintain my ability to communicate in two languages. For several years after that, I heard and spoke French less and less until I became determined to revive my French language skills. Now, I am pleased that my children are in the French Immersion program, and that through this French course, I can continue learning the language and culture along with them!

Therese Jelinski - participant since 1991, was raised in Uranium City. She is the mother of four children and is active in parish work in Prince Albert

Therese Jelinski

Il y a plusieurs années que l'importance de mon héritage français est devenu plus important quand j'ai réalisé que je n'entendais plus parler français régulièrement, donc je perdais mon habilité de communiquer dans ma langue maternelle. Je me suis inscrite à des cours de français au collège ici et l'année passée j'ai commencé ma participation dans ce cours d'alphabétisation. Faire partie de ce cours (et faire partie de la chorale française) m'aide à me sentir plus près de mes racines francophones. Avec un père qui a été élevé en France, une mère francophone, et de la parenté qui parle français, j'ai grand (en Saskatchewan), entendant la langue française à tous les jours et profitant des traditions francophones comme le réveillon après la messe de minuit, y compris les tourtières. À l'école secondaire, et plus tard à l'université à Ottawa, j'ai suivi des cours de français pour maintenir mon habilité à communiquer dans deux langues. Pour plusieurs années après ça, j'entendais et je parlais français de moins en moins jusqu'au point où je deviens déterminée à faire revivre mes habilités en la langue française. Maintenant, je suis contente que mes enfants font parties du programme d'immersion, et que, par ma participation au cours de français, je peux continuer à apprendre la langue et la culture avec eux!

Les écoles fransaskoises

by Marilyn Magnan

Throughout Saskatchewan and Western Canada there are pockets of francophones sprinkled all over the prairies. Small communities and towns bearing French names reflect the influx of pioneers from French Canada and Europe at the turn of the century. In towns like Gravelbourg, Montmartre, St-Brieux, Delmas and other, Francophones are struggling to maintain their French language and culture. The threat of assimilation is alarming. In the last decade, 65 per cent of francophones have lost their language and are now speaking only English. The francophones see the school as a beacon of hope in maintaining their language and culture. The school is one of the only institutions where their children can learn and live in their own culture and language. The province of Saskatchewan has made slow progress in giving the Fransaskois this right. We have progressed from Anderson's government in the 1930's, where it was forbidden by law to teach French in schools, to

the historic decision in 1978 in Section 180 of the Education Act that guarantees the right of access to a French designated program. This change in the law gave birth to the immersion schools of Canada. While these schools promoted bilingualism by leaps and bounds and provided Francophones with a French education, they could not satisfy all the needs of the Francophone community.

Around 1980, the fransaskois parents put pressures on the ministry of education and local school boards to offer a school where French is taught as the first language. This was the beginning of the fransaskois schools as we know them today. The latest development in the saga of fransaskois schools was in June 1993 when the government of Saskatchewan amended the school act to permit Francophones to govern their schools within their own fransaskois local school boards.

The fransaskois schools differ in many ways from immersion schools. The following chart gives details on the differences.*

Students

French School

- Designed for students whose parents qualify under Section 23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, that is citizens of Canada:
 - a) whose first language learned and still understood is FRENCH;
 - b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in FRENCH, that is in a French school;
 - c) of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in Canada in FRENCH, that is in a French school.**

Immersion School

- Designed for students whose parents wish them to learn French as a second language.
- Pursuant to provincial policy as described in the *Education Act* of Saskatchewan.



* Reprinted with permission of the Association culturelle franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan and the Canadian Parents for French - Saskatchewan.

** This paragraph has been added in order to facilitate the transition of a certain number of families to the new provisions of the charter.

Personnel

French School

- Teachers and all staff members are persons competent in their respective fields who:
 - a) master French as a first language;
 - b) live and transmit the values and culture of the Fransaskois in their every day life;
 - c) are knowledgeable in the pedagogy of French as a first language in a minority situation.
- Teachers and all staff members are involved in the francophone community and are committed to its aspirations, needs and spirit.

Immersion School

- Teachers are persons competent in their respective fields who:
 - a) have an acceptable level of competency and fluency in oral and written French;
 - b) are knowledgeable about French culture;
 - c) are knowledgeable in second language teaching methods.
- Teachers and all staff members are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of parents and students with respect to the acquisition of French as a second language.

Curriculum

French School

- Follows the curriculum established by the Department of Education of the province.

Immersion School

- Follows the curriculum established by the Department of Education of the province.

Operation

French School

- Requires **distinct** educational facilities.
- The entire school operation and activities are in French; communiques to parents are written in French.
- All subjects are taught in French except English language arts which starts in year three.
- Programs, communications and displays in the school promote the francophone linguistic and cultural heritage and foster a sense of francophone identity.
- Curricular and extracurricular programs and activities meet the educational and cultural needs of Francophones.
- Students are highly motivated to use the French language for all purposes.

Immersion School

- Wherever feasible, has distinct educational facilities.
- French is used as the language of communication with the students; communiques to parents are written in English.
- French is the language of instruction for at least 50 percent of the instructional time. French may be the sole language of instruction from kindergarten to year two.
- Activities, communications and displays in the school foster a French ambience.
- Curricular and extracurricular activities promote and enhance the attainment of the linguistic and cultural objectives of the program.
- Students are encouraged to use the French language within and outside the immersion.

We are at the beginning of an exciting era for education in Saskatchewan and for the Francophones of Saskatchewan. These historic developments will enable us to prepare our children to be proud, productive and strong citizens of a bilingual Canada in the third millennium.

Marilyn Magnan has taught for 15 years in French immersion schools in Alberta and Saskatchewan. She is presently principal at Mgr. de Laval school, the only Francophone school in Regina.

Les écoles fransaskoises

par Marilyn Magnan

Depuis plus de deux cents ans, partout en Saskatchewan on retrouve de petites communautés francophones qui nous rappellent la colonisation de l'ouest-canadien par l'arrivée de français et de québécois. Montmartre, Delmas, St. Brieux, Gravelbourg ainsi que plusieurs autres villes et villages de la province, comptent parmi eux des francophones qui luttent pour maintenir leur langue et leur culture française.

Le taux d'assimilation en Saskatchewan est alarmant. Depuis les derniers dix ans, 65 pourcent des fransaskois ont été assimilés à la langue anglaise. Les francophones persistent à dire que l'un des moyens d'enrayer cette situation c'est la création d'écoles fransaskoises.

La province de la Saskatchewan a tardé à répondre aux besoins éducationnels des francophones. Le gouvernement Anderson de 1930 interdisait l'enseignement du français dans les écoles. Puis, la décision historique de la section 180 de l'Acte de l'Éducation en 1978

est venue garantir le droit à l'accès à un enseignement en français. Ce changement de la loi a donné naissance aux écoles d'immersion française au Canada. Ces écoles offrent la chance aux citoyens du Canada de devenir bilingue mais ne répondent pas entièrement aux besoins des francophones qui vivent hors Québec.

Au cours des années 1980, les parents fransaskois par leur acharnement auprès des gouvernements, ont finalement obtenu le droit aux écoles désignées pour les fransaskois où le français est enseigné à titre de langue première.

Le dernier grand événement qu'ont connu les écoles fransaskoises a eu lieu en juin 1993 lorsque le gouvernement de la Saskatchewan a amendé la loi pour ainsi permettre aux fransaskois de gérer leurs écoles c'est-à-dire de créer leurs propres conseils scolaires.

Les écoles fransaskoises sont différentes des écoles d'immersion:*

Les élèves

École français

- Désignée pour les élèves dont les parents se qualifient sous l'article 23 de la *Charte des droits et libertés*, c'est-à-dire les citoyens du Canada:
 - a) dont la première langue apprise et encore comprise EST LE FRANCAIS.
 - b) qui ont reçu leur instruction au niveau primaire au Canada en FRANCAIS, c'est-à-dire dans une école française.
 - c) dont un enfant a reçu ou reçoit son instruction au niveau primaire ou secondaire au Canada EN FRANCAIS, c'est-à-dire dans une école française.**

- * Autorisation de L'Association culturelle franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan et de Canadian Parents for French-Saskatchewan.

**Ce paragraphe a été ajouté dans le but de faciliter la transition d'un certain nombre de familles aux nouvelles dispositions de la *Charte*.

École d'immersion

- Désignée pour les élèves dont les parents désirent qu'ils apprennent le français comme langue seconde.
- Relève d'une politique provinciale telle est qu'exprimée dans la *Loi scolaire* de la Saskatchewan



Le personnel

École française

- Les enseignant(e)s et tous les membres du personnel sont des personnes compétentes dans leur domaine respectif qui:
 - a) maîtrisent le français comme langue première.
 - b) vivent et transmettent les valeurs et la culture des Fransaskois dans leur vie de tous les jours.
 - c) connaissent la pédagogie du français comme langue première dans une situation minoritaire.
- Les enseignant(e)s et tous les membres du personnel s'impliquent dans la communauté francophone et en endossent pleinement ses attentes, ses besoins et son esprit.

École d'immersion

- Les enseignant(e)s sont des personnes compétentes dans leur domaine respectif qui ont:
 - a) un niveau acceptable de compétences en français oral et écrit.
 - b) une bonne connaissance de la culture française.
 - c) une connaissance des méthodes d'enseignement d'une langue seconde.
- Les enseignant(e)s et tous les membres du personnel s'associent aux besoins et aux attentes des parents et des élèves concernant l'acquisition du français en tant que langue seconde.

Programme d'Études

École française

- Le programme d'études est établi par le ministère de l'Éducation de la province.

École d'immersion

- Le programme d'études est établi par le ministère de l'Éducation de la province.

Fonctionnement

École française

- Exige un établissement éducationnel distinct.
- Tout le fonctionnement de l'école et ses activités sont en français; les communiqués aux parents sont écrits en français.
- Tous les sujets sont enseignés en français, excepté l'anglais qui commence en troisième année.
- Les activités, les communiqués et l'affichage dans l'école cherchent à éveiller l'identité et à promouvoir l'héritage linguistique et culturel des francophones.
- Les activités scolaires et parascolaires soutiennent les liens culturels francophones et répondent aux besoins éducatifs et culturels des francophones.
- Les élèves sont vivement motivés à parler français en toute occasion et partout.

École d'immersion

- Là où c'est possible, l'école occupe un établissement éducationnel distinct.
- Le français est utilisé comme langue de communication avec les élèves; les communiqués aux parents sont écrits en anglais.
- Le français est la langue d'instruction pour au moins 50 pourcent du temps d'enseignement. On peut utiliser le français comme seule langue d'enseignement de la maternelle à la deuxième année.
- Les activités, les communiqués et l'affichage contribuent à créer une ambiance française dans l'école.
- Les activités scolaires et parascolaires visent la réalisation des objectifs linguistiques et culturels du programme.
- Les élèves sont encouragés à parler français à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur d'école.

Nous sommes à l'aube d'une ère nouvelle dans le domaine de l'éducation en Saskatchewan ainsi que pour les fransaskois. Tous ces changements nous aideront à fournir à nos enfants les outils nécessaires pour leur permettre de devenir des citoyens fiers, responsables et capable de faire grandir un Canada bilingue dans le nouveau millénum.

Marilyn Magnan a enseigné quinze ans dans des écoles d'immersion en Alberta et en Saskatchewan. Depuis trois ans, elle est directrice de la seule école francophone de Regina, l'école Mgr. de Laval.

Fransaskois adult education services aims to improve quality of life

by Catherine Darvault

In February 1986, the Fransaskois Continuing Education Centre was inaugurated under the direction of Collège Mathieu in Gravelbourg. The centre has a mandate to meet the educational needs of adults throughout the province. Two years later, it became known as the *Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes* (Fransaskois Adult Education Service).

At the present time, the goal of adult education is to improve the quality of life of all citizens whether it be their personal, professional or public life. Our statistics indicate that more and more adults are planning for the future or are looking for a change of direction in their lives. It must be understood that education is no longer the

simple transmission of knowledge of skills. Rather, it is characterized by a helping relationship between teacher and learner. Never before have we, the French-speaking residents of Saskatchewan, had so many opportunities to reach our potential.

Our continuing education programmes offer a wide variety of training courses and activities to meet the specific needs of francophones in Saskatchewan: general interest courses, training sessions, workshops designed to meet particular needs. Our programme delivery is very flexible, allowing learners to enhance their skills at various times, by various means and in various places.

Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes vise à améliorer la qualité de vie chez les francophones

Le Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes est un service offrant de la formation en français équivalant à celle des collèges communautaires anglophones des différentes régions. Le SFEA offre des formations dans plusieurs domaines tels : langues et littérature, développement de la personne, musique, communication, histoire, santé, informatique, administration-gestion-économie, techniques

diverses, horticulture, développement du leadership, enfants et famille, environnement, alphabétisation, G.E.D. et autres.

Le SFEA, grâce à la technologie de son réseau d'éducation à distance, est en mesure d'offrir des formations et des activités populaires dans plusieurs localités et ce, en même temps.

Francophones keen on learning mother tongue

by Catherine Darvault

Within the context of a Language Reappropriation Project, the mandate of the literacy project is to help Saskatchewan francophones develop the necessary skills to master the French language and to allow the non-French speaking spouse to become an integral part of the French community.

The objectives of the literacy project are to empower the Fransaskois to better carry out all their activities requiring reading and writing in French. This French language training programme aims at enabling francophones to continue to read, to write and to do math for

their own personal development and for the development of their community.

The literacy programme developed for Saskatchewan francophones had to take into account the following realities. In some cases, francophones received their schooling in English only. The result of this situation is that, very often, pursuing a post-secondary education, entering the job market, etc. involved the use of English in the day to day life of francophones (often to the detriment of their fluency in French). In other cases, we found people with very little schooling.

On the other hand, more and more Saskatchewan francophones are showing a keen interest in re-learning, improving or using the French language. Furthermore, in Saskatchewan, at least 800 jobs require a knowledge of the French language.

Since there has been no formal,

structured French educational system in place, adult francophones in Saskatchewan are at all levels in their knowledge of the French language, both oral and written.

French literacy workshops are open to all Saskatchewan residents. For the last two years our service has organised 21 projects in 11 communities. The task at hand is enormous!

Les francophones manifestent de l'enthousiasme pour le réapprentissage de leur langue maternelle

par Catherine Darvault

Depuis 1991, le SFEA est heureux d'offrir à la population fransaskoise, son programme d'alphabétisation / réappropriation de la langue. Ces ateliers sont offerts aux fransaskoises et fransaskois qui veulent améliorer leur langue maternelle. Les ateliers s'adressent donc aux personnes francophones désirant améliorer leur français oral et écrit, aux conjointes et conjoints non-francophones de la famille et à toutes les personnes d'origine francophone qui n'utilisent plus la langue française.

Les ateliers sont adaptés aux besoins, au rythme et aux demandes des participantes et participants. Les groupes sont restreints et les ateliers se passent dans une ambiance agréable et détendue. Les ateliers ont lieu dans les communautés qui en font la demande. Les formatrices qui donnent ces ateliers sont des personnes de la communauté où a lieu l'atelier.

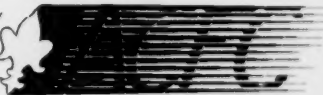
Le SFEA est le seul organisme à offrir des ateliers d'alphabétisation en français en Saskatchewan. Le SFEA travaille dans toutes les communautés qui manifestent un besoin. Depuis les

deux dernières années, le programme d'alphabétisation / réappropriation de la langue a été implanté dans onze (11) communautés : Bellevue, Domrémy, Gravelbourg, North Battleford, Regina, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, St-Denis, St-Louis, Willow Bunch et Zenon Park. Dans ces communautés, vingt et un (21) ateliers ont été offerts au cours des deux dernières années.

C'est avec les mots
que l'on découvre
qui nous sommes...

Words teach us
who we are...

ASSOCIATION
CULTURELLE
FRANCO-
CANADIENNE
DE LA
SASKATCHEWAN



working to promote the development
and vitality of the Fransaskois community.

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Manitoba pilot project helps French families

by Gloria Baril

Pluri-elles is a women's resource centre for francophones in Manitoba. This organization sponsors a literacy centre called Centre Alpha Saint-Boniface (CASB). Pluri-elles and CASB are celebrating the 1994 International Year of the Family by developing a way to help families.

L'alphabétisation et la famille is a unique literacy project for French-speaking families.

Many parents in our community speak French fluently but have weak reading and writing skills. Many of them feel that by improving their own skills, they will be better able to encourage and guide their children. As parents, they want their children to attend and to succeed in French schools. This gave rise to a new approach to literacy called *L'alphabétisation et la famille*.

This approach is used with parents and children to meet the particular needs of each. A pilot project was developed and tried from January 29 to April 30, 1994. Five families participated in it. Each of the twelve sessions began with a family activity. Following this, the children and the parents followed separate programmes. Developing confidence and self-esteem was an important part of every session.

The adult group explored topics related to self-esteem and to parenting. They improved their French language skills by speaking,

listening, reading and writing. They also learned how to be more effective parents.

The children ranged in age from three to nine years old. They were divided into two groups: the pre-schoolers and the school-aged children. Each group was offered a variety of activities to help them develop their personal and social skills. The French-speaking environment helped them develop their language skills.

The families attended the Saturday sessions together. The youngsters looked forward to being with their new friends. They also enjoyed the variety of activities available. The adults wanted to improve their French. They also wanted to share with other parents. In this environment, they learned to be more confident in their own abilities as parents.

Pluri-elles and CASB are pleased with the results of this new experience. We hope this project will be renewed in the fall so that we may again offer such a service to francophone parents who request it.

Gloria Baril has been involved in adult literacy for the past three years. She works for a literacy centre for francophones in Saint-Boniface, Manitoba. In 1993, she prepared a guide book for literacy practitioners. This year, she is coordinating a pilot project in family literacy.



International Year of the Family

Année internationale de la famille

Pluri-elles is a women's resource center for francophones in Manitoba. It offers a variety of services to women. Among them is a literacy centre called Centre Alpha Saint-Boniface. This centre offers help to those French speaking adults who request it.

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Projet pilote au Manitoba aide les familles francophones

par Gloria Baril

1994 est l'Année internationale de la famille. Nous, à Pluri-elles et au Centre Alpha de Saint-Boniface, célébrons la famille en leur offrant un nouveau service. *L'alphabétisation et la famille* est un projet pilote qui est unique au Canada français.

Nous, les francophones du Manitoba, vivons dans un milieu minoritaire. Parmi nous, il y a des parents qui savent parler le français mais qui sont faibles en lecture et en écriture. Leurs enfants sont ou seront dans des classes françaises. Les parents veulent que leurs enfants réussissent à l'école. Aussi, ils sont prêts à améliorer leurs habiletés en français. Avec plus de confiance, ils pourront mieux aider leurs jeunes. C'est pour aider ces parents que nous avons conçu le projet *L'alphabétisation et la famille*.

Ce projet vise à travailler avec des familles francophones. D'abord, il faut donner la chance aux parents d'améliorer leurs habiletés en français. Il faut aussi les appuyer dans leur rôle de mère ou de père. Ensuite, il faut s'occuper des enfants. Ils ont plusieurs choses à apprendre avant d'aller à l'école. S'ils savent apprendre, s'ils aiment apprendre et s'ils ont de la confiance, ils réussiront.

Nous avons donc développé des programmes pour les parents et les enfants. Ensuite, nous avons mis sur pied le projet pilote pour essayer nos idées. Cinq familles ont participé du 29 janvier au 30 avril 1994. Ils venaient le samedi. Ce jour-là, les parents et les enfants étaient moins fatigués, pressés et distraits. Chaque rencontre commençait par une activité de famille. Ensuite, les enfants et les parents se séparaient. Les groupes suivent un programme adapté à leurs besoins.

Lors des sessions d'adultes, les sept parents discutaient et travaillaient avec des thèmes qui touchaient leur vie de père ou de mère. Ils écoutaient, parlaient, lisaient et écrivaient en français. Durant la semaine, ils faisaient certaines activités à la maison avec leurs enfants.

Douze enfants de 3 à 9 ans se recontraient en deux groupes. Ils participaient à une variété d'activités selon leur âge. Trois animatrices dirigeaient les groupes. Elles encourageaient

les enfants à s'exprimer en français, à essayer des nouvelles choses et à bien vivre avec les autres garçons et filles.

Les parents et les enfants venaient ensemble aux rencontres. Les enfants venaient jouer avec leurs nouveaux amis et faisaient des activités intéressantes. Les adultes apprenaient à mieux fonctionner en français. Ils aimaient l'appui qu'ils recevaient comme parent. À cause de ces sessions, ils se sentaient mieux équipés pour surveiller le développement de leurs enfants.

Nous, à Pluri-elles et au Centre Alpha de Saint-Boniface, sommes très satisfaits de cette nouvelle expérience. *L'alphabétisation et la famille* a fait ses preuves. C'est un service valable que nous espérons offrir de nouveau à l'automne.

Gloria Baril a une formation en éducation. Depuis trois ans, elle travaille avec Pluri-elles et le Centre Alpha à Saint-Boniface. En 1993, elle prépara le document Guide de formation pour les bénévoles en alphabétisation. Elle est présentement coordonnatrice du projet L'alphabétisation et la famille.

Pluri-elles (Manitoba) Inc. est un centre de femmes qui offre une gamme de services à sa clientèle francophone. Entre autres, cet organisme a un centre d'alphabétisation appelé le Centre Alpha de Saint-Boniface. Ce centre offre de l'aide aux adultes qui le désirent.

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In New Brunswick, community colleges empower adult learners

by Bernard M. Thériault

In 1990 the government announced its intention to raise the literacy level by four percent by 1994. This goal has already been attained in part through a new initiative aimed at creating community-based upgrading classes.

According to the 1986 census, the literacy rate of the province was around 77 percent. The illiteracy rate was particularly high in Francophone regions. Among the reasons for this situation were slow access to education in French and employment in industries like fisheries and forestry that did not require a lot of schooling.

One of the first major steps in the literacy movement was to recognize the extent of the problem in the province. That was done through a report entitled *A Second Chance: Literacy in New Brunswick*. The report and its recommendations brought the implementation of structures to respond to the needs identified.

The more recent and extensive literacy program is a new initiative called Community Academic Services Program (CASP). A strong partnership between the community, the private sector and the government is the key to this program. A local committee of volunteers is formed according to needs and becomes responsible for delivering training in the familiar context of the community. The Department of Advanced Education and Labour (DAEL), responsible for post secondary education, provides the curriculum and ensures evaluation. Since its beginning in June of 1991, more than 270 projects have been organized providing access to training to approximately 4,000 people; 141 of these projects were in French.

Training provided through CASP is mainly at the basic level (corresponding to approximately grades 1 through 6). The campuses of the Community College are the main providers of training at the intermediate (7-9) and senior level (10 - 12). Four of the nine campuses of the network are designated as francophone institutions. Each of these employs a literacy coordinator who is responsible for promoting academic upgrading programs and for acting as a resource person for local communities and volunteer literary councils. About 25 councils

are active in the Francophone areas of the province.

Special projects like the Youth Strategy and New Brunswick Work are aimed at specific clientele: respectively, youths aged from 15 to 24 and social assistance recipients.

During the last few years, DAEL has done a major reorganization of its academic sector. New curriculum and an approach better suited to adults learners are now being used. The learning objectives of that material are now identical to those of the Department of Education. The requirements are the same for different methods of delivery and courses are recognized by other learning institutions. Successful students can obtain a high school diploma for adults. Presently, efforts are being made to introduce, to a greater extent, learning in the work place.

In closing, it can be noted that New Brunswick was the first province to appoint, in the fall of 1991, a minister of state for literacy. It is an example of the province's commitment to the cause of literacy.

Bernard M. Thériault is program coordinator with the Department of Advanced Education and Labour since 1989, working at central office in Fredericton.

Golf for Literacy

The Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation encourages everyone to support the 1994 PGI Golf Tournament and Literacy Award of Merit event in Regina. Your support and contributions help literacy programs within Saskatchewan.



Watch for the date.

Au Nouveau-Brunswick les collèges communautaires donnent le plein pouvoir aux apprenants adultes

par Bernard M. Thériault

Le gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick annonçait en 1990 son intention d'augmenter, sur le cours de quatre années, le taux d'alphabétisation de quatre pourcent. Cet objectif a déjà été atteint grâce, en partie, à une nouvelle initiative visant à créer des classes de récupération scolaire dans les communautés. Selon les données du recensement de 1986, le taux d'alphabétisation de la province se situait aux environs de 77 pourcent. Les régions francophones ont été beaucoup touchées par le problème de l'analphabétisme. Plusieurs raisons ont contribué à cette situation dont l'accès plutôt lent à l'éducation en langue française et des emplois dans des industries qui n'exigeaient pas beaucoup de scolarité comme les pêcheries et la foresterie.

Une première étape très importante dans le mouvement d'alphabétisation a été de reconnaître l'étendue du problème dans la province. C'est ce qui a été réalisé en 1982 dans un rapport intitulé: Une deuxième chance L'alphabétisation au Nouveau-Brunswick. Le rapport et ses recommandations ont été l'occasion de mettre en place des structures pour répondre aux besoins de formation identifiés.

Un des plus récents programmes d'alphabétisation étendu à toute la province est une initiative appelée Programme communautaire de récupération scolaire (PCRS). La base du programme repose sur un partenariat entre la communauté, le secteur privé et le gouvernement. Un comité local de bénévoles se forme selon les besoins et devient responsable de livrer de la formation dans le contexte familial de la communauté. Le Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et Travail (MEST), responsable de l'enseignement post-secondaire, fournit le matériel pédagogique et assure l'évaluation. Depuis le début de cette initiative en juin 1991 plus de 270 projets ont été mis sur pied, ce qui a donné l'accès à de la formation à près de 4 000 personnes. Cent quarante et un (141) de ces projets étaient situés dans des régions francophones.

La formation offerte dans les PCRS se situe surtout au niveau de base, ce qui correspond au niveau de 1^{ère} à 6^e année. Ce sont

principalement les campus du Collège communautaire qui assurent la formation au niveau intermédiaire (équivalent de 7^e à 9^e année) et au niveau secondaire (équivalent de 10^e à 12^e année). Quatre (4) des neuf (9) campus du réseau sont désignés comme étant des institutions francophones. Chacun emploie un coordonnateur d'alphabétisation chargé de promouvoir les programmes de récupération scolaire et d'agir comme ressource auprès des communautés et en particulier des conseils d'alphabétisation. Environ vingt-cinq (25) conseils sont à l'oeuvre dans les régions francophones de la province.

Des programmes spéciaux comme la Stratégie-Jeunesse et Nouveau-Brunswick au Travail s'adressent à des clientèles particulières soit respectivement les jeunes âgés de 15 à 24 ans et les personnes recevant de l'aide au revenu.

Au cours des dernières années, le Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et Travail a réorganisé de façon importante le secteur des études générales. Du matériel pédagogique nouveau et selon une approche plus appropriée aux adultes est maintenant disponible. Les objectifs des contenus de cours de ce matériel sont maintenant conformes à ceux du Ministère de l'Éducation, les exigences sont les mêmes peu importe le mode de livraison, et les cours sont reconnus par les autres maisons d'enseignement. L'étudiant qui complète sa formation avec succès peut obtenir un certificat ou encore un diplôme d'études secondaires pour adultes. Par ailleurs, des efforts sont faits pour introduire davantage de formation dans les milieux de travail.

En terminant, on peut souligner que la province du Nouveau-Brunswick a été la première province à nommer, à l'automne 1991, un ministre d'état à l'alphabétisation. C'est un bel exemple de l'engagement de la province envers la cause de l'alphabétisation.

Bernard M. Thériault est agent de coordination de programme au Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et du Travail depuis 1989 au bureau central situé à Fredericton.

Collège de l'Acadie:

The new kid on the block in Nova Scotia's distance education

by Nancy Deveau

Collège de l'Acadie is part of the Nova Scotia Community College. Created under a federal-provincial agreement signed in August, 1988, it consists of an administrative centre and six learning centres located throughout the province in the Acadian regions of Argyle, Clare, Halifax-Dartmouth, Pomquet, Richmond and Chéticamp.

Collège de l'Acadie is a francophone community college whose mission is to provide professional and technical training to the French speaking population of Nova Scotia. The province has a population of approximately 900,000 inhabitants of which 40,000 are French speaking.

The distances which separate the Acadian areas of Nova Scotia are great, but Collège de l'Acadie uses videoconferencing and audiographics to bring its services and programs to where they are needed. The two networks function simultaneously so that two classes in separate classrooms can be offered at the same time. Both networks operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They operate on telephone lines, are very easy to use, and therefore do not require technical assistance.

Instruction in the full-time day programs is provided by teachers located in different learning centres. Facilitators play the role of liaison between the students and the teachers, ensuring that all relevant class materials and documents are in the hands of the students as needed.

This system of distance education has proven to be effective, reliable and requires very little upkeep. Students adapt easily to using the technologies and the teachers have had to make only a few changes in the delivery of instruction.

In 1992-93, Collège de l'Acadie was able to offer four one-year programs: Academic Upgrading, Bilingual Secretarial, Business Computer Technician and Accounting. A total of 93 students were registered in these full-time

day programs. Evening courses and customized training attracted over 600 part-time students.

In 1993-94, nine programs were offered and full-time day enrolment increased by 20 percent. Registrations for evening courses and customized training exceeded all expectations. As a gesture of cooperation, space within the centres and access to the technologies was also made available to various community groups for meetings.

Furthermore, Collège de l'Acadie offers literacy training (Academic Upgrading) in all the learning centres. Classroom material for this program was provided by the Government of New Brunswick. The program is modular based which permits students to learn on an individual basis with the assistance of a facilitator in each learning centre.

A project as innovative as Collège de l'Acadie has generated a lot of interest not only at the provincial level but also at the national level. The two neighboring provinces of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, which have significant francophone populations, have expressed interest in the Collège's programs and services. Prince Edward Island has begun to explore the possibility of becoming the seventh learning centre of Collège de l'Acadie.

For more information on Collège de l'Acadie's programs and services, do not hesitate to write to the following address:

Collège de l'Acadie

P.O. Box 8

Meteghan River, Nova Scotia

B0W 2L0.

Telephone: (902) 769-0851

Fax: (902) 769-0165.

Collège de l'Acadie:

Le dernier-né dans le domaine de l'enseignement à distance

par Nancy Deveau

Le Collège de l'Acadie, collège communautaire de la Nouvelle-Écosse, a été créé en août 1988 suite à la signature d'une entente fédérale-provinciale. Il est composé d'un centre administratif et de six centres de formation situés dans les régions d'Argyle, de Clare, d'Halifax-Dartmouth, de Pomquet, de Richmond et de Chéticamp.

Le Collège de l'Acadie est un collège communautaire francophone qui a comme mission d'offrir une formation technique et professionnelle aux francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Cette province a une population d'environ 900,000 habitants, dont 40,000 francophones.

Les distances entre les régions acadiennes sont grandes, mais le Collège de l'Acadie est doté de réseaux de conférences audiographiques et de vidéoconférences. Les deux fonctionnent simultanément, permettant d'offrir deux cours en même temps et ce, 24 heures par jour, tous les jours. Les systèmes sont reliés par de lignes téléphoniques et sont faciles à utiliser. Ils ne requièrent pas de techniciens.

Pour assurer la livraison des cours de la programmation régulière, les professeurs travaillent à partir de différents centres de formation. Les facilitateurs ont comme rôle de faire le lien entre les professeurs et les étudiants. Il doivent aussi s'assurer que tous les documents relatifs aux cours parviennent à ces derniers.

Les technologies utilisées se sont avérées efficaces, de peu d'entretien et d'une grande fiabilité. Les étudiants se sont adaptés facilement au fonctionnement des systèmes et les professeurs ont eu peu de modifications à apporter à leur cours.

Ce modèle d'enseignement à distance a permis au Collège de l'Acadie d'offrir en 1992-93 quatre programmes d'un an: études générales, secrétariat bilingue, informatique commerciale et comptabilité. 93 étudiants se sont inscrits à temps plein dans l'un ou l'autre

de ces programmes. Les cours du soir et de formation sur mesure ont attiré de leur côté près de 600 étudiants à temps partiel.

En 1993-94, neuf programmes ont été offerts au Collège de l'Acadie et les inscriptions à temps plein ont augmenté de 20 pourcent. Les inscriptions pour les cours du soir et pour la formation sur mesure ont également dépassé toutes les attentes du Collège. Pour collaborer aussi avec différents groupes communautaires, le Collège a mis à la disposition des gens toutes ses installations et sa technologie pour leurs réunions.

Depuis ses débuts, le Collège de l'Acadie offre des services d'alphabétisation dans toutes les régions qu'il dessert. Utilisant principalement le matériel qui a été élaboré pour les programmes de récupération scolaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, les apprenants peuvent progresser à leur propre rythme, encadrés par les facilitateurs des centres.

Il va sans dire qu'un projet aussi innovateur que le Collège de l'Acadie crée beaucoup d'intérêt, non seulement au niveau provincial mais national. Les francophones de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et de Terre-Neuve ont manifesté de l'intérêt pour les programmes et les services du Collège. L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard a même exprimé le désir d'explorer la possibilité de devenir le septième centre de formation du Collège de l'Acadie.

Pour obtenir plus d'information sur nos programmes et nos services, n'hésitez pas à vous adresser au:

**Collège de l'Acadie
C.P. 8
La Butte, Nouvelle-Écosse
BOW 2L0**

Téléphone: (902) 769-0851
Télécopieur: (902) 769-0165

Oral history project aims to develop pride in French heritage

by Joëlle Désy

The Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE) has received funding from the National Literacy Secretariat to set up an oral history project. The aim of the project is to use oral history to provide literacy skills and to create relevant reading material while developing pride in our own culture and heritage.

In mid-February six co-ordinators were hired on a part-time basis (15 hours per week) to conduct project activities in Pomquet (Antigonish Co.), Pubnico (Yarmouth Co.), Saulnierville (Digby Co.), Halifax-Dartmouth, Chéticamp (Inverness Co.) and Petit-de-Grat (Richmond Co.). Their contract ends at the end of June.

Their Mandate is:

- to recruit adult learners;

- to provide reading and writing workshops;

- to develop learner-written materials promoting the traditions, customs, folklore, historical characters, legends, songs, vocabulary, etc. of their respective communities.

Depending on the needs identified in their regions, they may also be asked to set up one-to-one tutoring programs and to establish adult reading clubs.

Our main challenge is to convince people why they should learn to read and write in French instead of English, the language of the majority.

The FANE also published its first issue of what we hope will become a semestrial newsletter called *In-formation*. The newsletter has been set up after a recommendation from the general meeting of the Fédération acadienne asking for some dialogue in French adult education. The newsletter provides those involved in the field of French adult education with information about the different activities in our communities.

A small grant from the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (Canadian Federation for French Literacy) allowed two groups to buy written material for the local reading clubs and to provide workshops for parents.

Joëlle Désy is Director of Communications, Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

La Société historique de la Saskatchewan existe depuis 1978. Ses buts sont de faire connaître l'histoire des francophones de la Saskatchewan en encourageant des projets de recherche, de rédaction et de publication. La Société historique publie un bulletin, la *Revue historique*, quatre fois l'an.

Depuis sa fondation, la Société historique de la Saskatchewan a publié de nombreux ouvrages qui concernent les francophones de la Saskatchewan.

Histoire des Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan

de Richard Lapointe et Lucille Tessier (1986)

La Saskatchewan de A à Z de Richard Lapointe (1987)

100 NOMS: Petit dictionnaire biographique des Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan

de Richard Lapointe (1988)

Saskatlas de Richard Lapointe (1990)

Le défi de la radio française en Saskatchewan

de Laurier Gareau (1990)

La Voix du peuple d'Albert Dubé (1994)

Pour plus de renseignements:

Société historique de la Saskatchewan

2123, rue Broad

Regina (Saskatchewan)

S4P 1Y6

Téléphone: (306) 522-2772

Télécopieur: 569-2402



Projet d'histoire orale développe de la fierté pour l'héritage en français

par Joëlle Désy

La Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle Écosse (FANE) a reçu l'appui financier du Secrétariat national à l'alphabétisation pour bâtir un projet en histoire orale. Le but de ce projet est de se servir de l'histoire orale pour promouvoir les habiletés en alphabétisation et fournir du matériel de lecture tout en développant de la fierté de notre culture et notre héritage.

À la mi-février, six coordonnateurs ont été engagés à mi-temps (15 hres/sem.) pour mener des activités de projet à Pomquet (cté d'Antigonish), à Pubnico (cté de Yarmouth), à Saulnierville (cté de Digby), à Halifax-Dartmouth, Chéticamp (cté d'Inverness) et Petit-de-Grat (cté de Richmond). Leurs contrats finissent à la fin du mois de juin.

Leur mandat est:

- de recruter des apprenants adultes
- de pourvoir des ateliers de lecture et d'écriture
- de développer du matériel écrit par des apprenants et promouvant les traditions, les coutumes, le folklore, les personnages historiques, les légendes, les chansons, le vocabulaire, etc., de leur communauté respective.

Dépendamment des besoins identifiés dans

les régions, les coordonnateurs peuvent être appelés à bâtir des programmes de tutorat et d'établir des clubs de lecture pour adultes.

Notre plus grand défi reste à convaincre les gens du pourquoi apprendre à lire et à écrire en français plutôt qu'en anglais, la langue de la majorité.

La FANE a aussi publié leur premier numéro d'un journal semestriel au titre *Information*. Ce journal a vu le jour suite à une recommandation à la réunion générale de la Fédération acadienne demandant une concertation en éducation des adultes en français. Le journal fournit aux intervenants en éducation des adultes de l'information à propos des activités dans nos communautés.

Une petite subvention de la part de la Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (Canadian Federation for French Literacy) a permis à deux groupes de s'acheter du matériel pour leur club de lecture local et d'offrir des ateliers aux parents.

Joëlle Désy

Directrice de la communication

Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

Brief Description of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

The Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE) serves as representative for the Acadian population of Nova Scotia. It undertakes community development in Acadian regions.

The FANE deals with many important issues for the Acadian people: economy, youth, women, culture, seniors and literacy.

Brève description de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

L'organisme porte-parole des Acadiens de la province, la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE) regroupe les Acadiens et s'occupe de développement communautaires en régions acadiennes.

Aucours des années la FANE a développé plusieurs dossiers importants pour la communauté acadienne: économie, jeunes, femmes, culture, aîné-e-s et alphabétisation.

Ontario Federation of Labour takes on francophone literacy for workers / La fédération du travail de l'Ontario s'implique dans l'alphabétisation des travailleuses et travailleurs francophones

by Tamara Levine

BEST, (Basic Education for Skills Training) is a workplace basic skills program sponsored by the Ontario Federation of Labour, which represents 800,000 union members in Ontario.

Established in 1988, BEST works with local unions to negotiate support from employers so that employees can participate in BEST at the workplace, at least partly on paid time. BEST then trains co-workers as instructors to go back to their own workplaces and run classes in English or French literacy or English or French as a second language, depending on the needs of the members. Two other provincial programs have been developed using the BEST model: WEST in Saskatchewan and EAST in New Brunswick.

When BEST was being designed, it was

recognized that about 5.5 percent of the population of Ontario is French-speaking. New statistics were emerging which indicated that the rate of illiteracy was significantly higher among francophones than anglophones (almost 40 percent compared to 25 percent). In light of the anticipated need for French literacy programs, three of the original eight regional co-ordinator positions were designated bilingual in the areas of the highest concentrations of francophones: the Eastern, the North-Eastern and the North-Western regions of the province.

Following are two short articles by BEST participants:

Tamara Levine

BEST coordinator, Eastern Ontario Region

The BEST Program: What Can It Do For Me?

by Liette Anderson

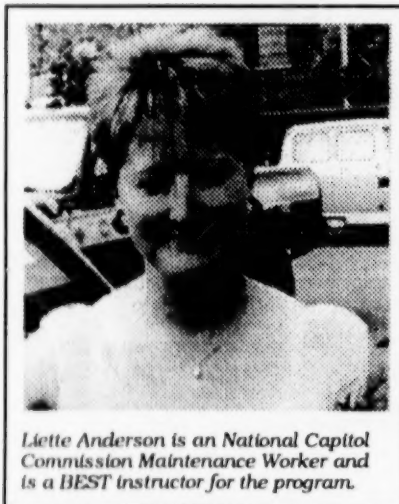
I was born in the Gaspé, the eighteenth of 20 children. It was always disappointing to me that I had never had the chance to finish high school. When I was 18 years old, I moved to Gatineau, Quebec.

After staying at home with my daughter for five years, I decided it was time to find a paying job. I had grown up on a farm, and had always wanted to find a job where I could work outside. That idea brought me to the "PIF" program, which helps women to re-enter the paid work force. PIF referred me to a job at the National Capital Commission as a labourer in

Le programme BEST : Qu'est-ce que ça peut m'apporter?

par Liette Anderson

Je suis native de la Gaspésie, la dix-huitième d'une famille de vingt enfants. J'étais très frustrée de ne pas avoir eu la chance de terminer mes études secondaires. À l'âge de dix-huit ans, j'ai déménagé dans la région de Gatineau. Après avoir demeuré cinq ans à la maison pour élever ma fille, je me suis enfin décidée à trouver un travail payant. Ayant été élevée sur une ferme, j'ai toujours désiré travailler en plein air. Cela m'a amenée au programme PIFC (Project d'intégration des femmes) qui m'a référée à un emploi non



Liette Anderson is an National Capital Commission Maintenance Worker and is a BEST instructor for the program.

Gatineau Park, and I've been with the NCC since 1985.

I first heard about the BEST Program (Basic Education for Skills Training) in the spring of 1991. I wondered what I could gain from such a program. Was it only for people who didn't know how to read or write? After I watched the BEST video and listened to an information session, I thought maybe I could get something out of BEST that would help me at work and in other parts of my life. So I decided to take the plunge.

With seven co-workers, I signed up as a participant in the BEST program. Eric Hébert, who works as a designer at the NCC and who had been trained by BEST, was our instructor.

Little by little, my confidence started to grow as the weeks passed in the BEST program. My written French began to improve because I had the opportunity to practice. I even started to help my daughter with her homework for the first time. Almost without realizing it, our group began to feel sort of like a family. We saw that we weren't alone, that we were there for each other.

At the end of the year, we had our graduation. Each class had to choose a spokesperson to talk about what they had gained from being in BEST. I was chosen to speak in front of 100 co-workers, supervisors and friends. What an experience! The night before graduation lasted forever, because I didn't sleep a wink. But everyone told me afterwards that I had done well, and that I didn't seem to be as nervous as I really was. All the participants were really proud when they received their certificates.

Eric, our instructor, had decided that he wasn't able to continue instructing for a second year. The first time he asked me whether I wanted to take his place as an instructor I said: "I can't do that!" But when I thought about it, I said to myself, "If I don't try, I'll never know if I could have done it or not." I got lots of encouragement and support from my friends, and the other BEST instructors, Robert Ozoux, Eric Hébert and Jim Hume said they would help me out. Finally, I agreed to do it.

On August 8, I left for two weeks for Barrie, Ontario (North of Toronto) with my daughter Vicky and Nicole Trudel (also from the NCC) for

traditionnel à la Commission de la Capitale nationale, comme journalière dans le parc de la Gatineau.

C'est au printemps 1991 que j'ai, pour la première fois, entendu parler du programme BEST (Éducation de base pour la formation professionnelle). Je me suis demandée ce qu'un tel programme pourrait m'apporter... si c'était seulement pour le monde qui ne savait ni lire ni écrire? Quand j'ai vu le vidéo BEST et entendu les informations, j'ai pensé que peut-être BEST pourrait apporter quelque chose à ma vie et à mon travail. J'ai donc décidé de me lancer dans ce grand défi.

Avec sept autres collègues de travail, je me suis inscrite comme participante au programme BEST. Eric Hébert, qui travaille comme dessinateur à la CCN et qui a été formé par BEST, était instructeur. Peu à peu, l'expérience m'a apporté de la confiance. J'ai eu la chance aussi d'améliorer mon expression écrite parce que j'avais l'occasion de me pratiquer régulièrement. J'ai même eu la chance, pour la première fois, de comprendre les devoirs de ma fille et de l'aider. Avec les autres participants, on a bâti quelque chose de très familial. On voyait qu'on n'était pas seuls, et qu'on pouvait se soutenir l'un et l'autre.

À la fin de l'année, on a eu notre graduation. On recherchait un porte-parole dans chaque classe pour aller parler de ce que le programme BEST nous avait apporté. J'ai été choisie pour parler devant une centaine de collègues de travail, superviseurs et amis. C'était toute une expérience! J'ai trouvé la nuit précédente très longue parce que je n'ai pas dormi du tout. Après, les gens m'ont dit que c'était bien, même si j'étais extrêmement nerveuse. Tous les participants étaient fiers lorsqu'ils ont reçu leur certificat.

Mon instructeur, Eric, avait décidé de ne pas continuer pour une deuxième année. La première fois qu'il m'a demandé si je voulais prendre sa place, j'ai dit : «Je ne suis pas capable.» Mais j'ai réfléchi, et je me suis dit : «Si je n'essais pas, je ne saurai jamais si je serai capable ou non.» J'avais des amis qui m'ont encouragée, et les instructeurs de BEST en français, Eric et Robert Ozoux, m'ont assuré qu'ils seraient là pour moi. Enfin, j'ai dit oui.

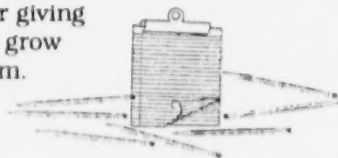
Le 8 août, je suis partie pour deux semaines

The BEST Program (continued)

the BEST Instructor Training Course. For Vicky and me, it was our first time flying in an airplane! The instructors who were there to be trained with us were from all over Ontario, and most of them didn't speak any French at all. But little by little, we began to understand each other. I even learned to play cards in English. The others in my group were really interested in hearing what it was like to be a participant in the BEST program, because I was the only one who had had that experience.

When I got back to Ottawa, I was really anxious to start my BEST program. I started at the end of October with five participants. Now, many months later, I am constantly amazed at how quickly they are learning, and how their confidence has grown both at work and at home. Even the supervisor of one of my participants remarked on how his employee had blossomed at work and how he was expressing himself much better. This supervisor continues to encourage this employee to participate in BEST.

It's almost the end of our year together, and we're starting to think about graduation again. Thanks to BEST, I have had the courage to decide to go back to school next year to finish high school. Even though I know that it's going to be tough, I'm pretty sure that I'm going to make it, and that I'll take up other challenges down the road. I'd like to thank the NCC, the union and the BEST program for giving me the chance to grow and follow a dream.



Le programme BEST (suite)

avec ma fille Vicky et Nicole Trudel (aussi de la CCN) pour Barrie, au nord de Toronto, pour la session de formation d'instructeurs de BEST. C'était le premier vol en avion pour moi et ma fille! Les instructeurs en formation venaient de partout en Ontario et la plupart d'entre eux ne parlaient pas du tout le français. Mais peu à peu, on arrivait à se comprendre...J'ai même appris à jouer aux cartes en anglais. Les autres gens de mon groupe étaient très intéressés d'apprendre de mes expériences comme participante dans un programme BEST, parce que j'étais la seule qui avait vécu cette expérience.

Quand je suis retournée à Ottawa, j'avais très hâte de débiter comme instructrice du programme BEST. J'ai commencé à la fin du mois d'octobre avec cinq participants. Je suis toujours étonnée de voir comment ils peuvent apprendre aussi vite, et à quel point ils gagnent confiance et assurance autant à la maison qu'au travail. Même le superviseur d'un de mes participants avait remarqué qu'il s'épanouissait au travail, qu'il s'exprimait plus facilement. Ce superviseur continue de l'encourager à participer au programme BEST.

C'est presque la fin de notre année ensemble, et on planifie notre propre graduation. Grâce à BEST, j'ai eu le courage de prendre la décision de retourner à l'école l'année prochaine pour finir mon secondaire V. Même si je sais que ça va être difficile par moments, je suis certaine que je vais être capable de passer au travers, et d'avoir d'autres défis dans l'avenir.

J'aimerais remercier la Commission, le syndicat et le programme BEST pour m'avoir donné la chance de m'épanouir et de poursuivre un rêve.

A special thanks to:

- College Mathieu for helping to fund this issue of *Literacy Works*.
- Also, some of the translation work for this special issue of *Literacy Works* was done by Janice Thomas Gervais.

Marcel Gauthier's Story

My name is Marcel Gauthier, and I am a Franco-Ontarian. I live in Northern Ontario in a small town called Cobalt, where the people are mostly English-speaking. Last February, I participated in a training course for instructors with the BEST program in a place called Port Stanton, about 100 miles north of Toronto. When I got there, I was told that I would be part of the francophone group. Since I'm bilingual, I didn't think it made much difference whether I took the course in English or French. The co-ordinator told me that it was really important to be trained in your mother tongue.

During the part of the training that dealt with learning in your first language, we were asked to write about something important that had happened to us. First we wrote in English, then we had to write about the same subject again, but in French. When I did my writing in French, I found it so much easier. I could say more and express myself better, in a more personal way. I was surprised to see the difference!

In the session on equality, I wrote about an experience I had had. As we were doing this session jointly with the anglophone group, I read my story to the group in English. The co-ordinator asked me to read my story again, but in French this time. Again, I couldn't believe the difference ... I felt the words, they came from my heart.

I believe I got more out of the training in French because I was better able to express myself and be who I am.

In friendship from a proud French Canadian.



Marcel Gauthier works at Rexwood Industries, a sawmill in Cobalt, Ontario. He was one of the "pioneers" at the first BEST instructor training in February, 1994 in which a group of Francophone instructors received their training entirely in French under the direction of Monique Joly, BEST's French Training Co-ordinator. After his training, he went back to his workplace to start a French literacy class with seven participants.

Histoire de Marcel Gauthier

Je m'appelle Marcel Gauthier, je suis franco-ontarien. Je demeure dans le Nord de l'Ontario, dans une petite ville majoritairement anglophone qui se nomme Cobalt. Au mois de février dernier j'ai participé au cours de formation BEST qui avait lieu à Port Stanton, Ontario. À mon arrivée on m'a informé que je ferais partie du groupe francophone. Comme je suis bilingue, j'ai pensé que ça n'avait pas vraiment d'importance si le cours se donnait en français ou en anglais. La coordonnatrice m'a expliqué que c'était très important d'être formé dans sa langue maternelle.

Dans une session sur la langue maternelle elle nous a demandé d'écrire sur un événement important dans

notre vie et de l'écrire sur le même sujet, mais en français. Lorsque je l'ai écrit en français, j'ai trouvé ça beaucoup plus facile. Je pouvais en dire plus et m'exprimer mieux. J'étais surpris de voir la différence et aussi c'était plus personnel.

Dans une session sur l'égalité, j'ai écrit en français au sujet d'une expérience que j'avais vécue. Comme ce cours se donnait avec le I groupe anglophone aussi, j'ai lu mon histoire au groupe en anglais. La coordonnatrice m'a demandé de relire mon texte, mais en français cette fois. Je peux vous dire que c'était différent, je sentais les mots, ils venaient vraiment de moi.

Je crois que j'ai reçu plus de la formation en français car je pouvais m'exprimer mieux et c'était beaucoup plus personnel.

D'un fier Canadien français.

Labour Congress offers bilingual training in New Brunswick

by Ethel Sweeney

Effective Adult Skills Training (EAST) is a pilot project of the Canadian Labour Congress, with the full support of its affiliates and the New Brunswick Federation of Labour. The project started in 1990, "International Literacy Year".

EAST offers workers the opportunity to participate in training programs at their workplace. EAST also offers to all members the chance to improve their skills in reading, writing, mathematics and communication. EAST also offers the chance to learn English or French for those whose first language is neither English or French.

Programs are given at the workplace, union hall or community centre. Some programs are held partly during working hours and are offered to all members regardless of their education levels.

EAST programs are offered at no cost. There are no registration costs. Programs can be at the basic, intermediate or advanced level depending on the needs of the participants. In New Brunswick, EAST programs are available

in English and French. Instructors are co-workers and are trained by the Canadian Labour Congress.

Program Objectives

- to offer learning opportunities for union members throughout New Brunswick.
- to open up training and job options.
- to enable more active participation at work, at home, in the union and in the community.
- to build confidence through improved communication skills.
- to prepare workers for other training and educational programs.

Confidentiality is assured to all participants.

Each program runs for 37 weeks, four hours per week during a one-year period and can start any time once all arrangements have been made. There are usually six to 10 participants per program.

Programs are given at times which are convenient to participants - mornings, afternoons, or evenings.

Le Congrès du Travail offre de la formation bilingue au Nouveau-Brunswick

par Ethel Sweeney

Education Supplémentaire pour Travailleuses et Travailleurs (EST) est un projet-pilote du Congrès du Travail du Canada, avec l'appui des syndicats affiliés et la Fédération des travailleuses et travailleurs du Nouveau-Brunswick. Ce Projet-pilote fut débuté en 1990 (l'Année Internationale d'Alphabétisation).

EST offre aux travailleuses et aux travailleurs l'occasion de participer à des programmes de formation dans leur milieu de travail. EST est offert à tous les membres qui désirent améliorer leurs connaissances afin de mieux lire, écrire, faire des mathématiques ou communiquer. EST offre également aux

personnes la chance d'apprendre l'anglais ou le français si leur langue maternelle n'est pas l'anglais ou le français.

Les cours sont donnés dans le milieu de travail ou dans une salle syndicale ou communautaire des environs. Un nombre de cours sont offerts en partie pendant les heures de travail rémunérées. Les programmes sont offerts à tous les membres quelque soit leur niveau d'éducation.

Tous les programmes sont offerts gratuitement. Il n'y a aucun frais d'inscription ou autre. Les programmes peuvent être soit au niveau de base, intermédiaire, ou avancé selon les besoins des travailleurs et travailleuses et

sont disponibles en français et anglais partout au Nouveau-Brunswick. Les enseignantes et enseignants sont des membres de la base formés par le Congrès du travail du Canada.

Objectifs du programme

- Offre aux membres des syndicats affiliés du N-B la possibilité d'enrichir leurs connaissances.
- Élargi les choix de formation professionnelle et d'emploi
- Encourage une participation active au travail, à la maison, au syndicat et dans la communauté
- Donne une plus grande confiance personnelle grâce à l'amélioration des capacités de communication
- Prépare les travailleuses et travailleurs à suivre d'autres programmes de formation et

d'éducation

- La confidentialité est assurée

Calendrier des cours EST

Chaque programme est d'une durée de 37 semaines échelonnées sur une période de 52 semaines.

Les programmes commencent à n'importe quel moment au cours de l'année, dès que tous les arrangements sont pris. Il devrait y avoir des groupes de six à 10 travailleurs ou travailleuses par programme.

Les cours sont donnés à n'importe quel moment de la journée qui convient aux participants soit le matin, l'après-midi ou le soir.

Ethel Sweeney travail pour le Congrès du Travail du Canada a Nouveau-Brunswick.

Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) Link Direction and board structure

by E. Duane Rose

The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) has revised its by-laws and constitution in order to provide the MCL Board of Directors with greater regional input on the direction of literacy programming in Canada.

These bylaws and policies are designed to separate the operational details from the discussion and planning of pertinent and pressing national literacy issues. These discussions will become the focus of advocacy work which reflect's MCL's mission statement. The operational details will be handled by the Executive Committee. This will allow the Board to concentrate on the larger issues facing literacy programming in Canada.

The new Board of Directors consists of a six-member Executive Committee elected by the Board, Carole Olson from Estevan as one of three Representative Directors-At-Large, and two representatives from each provincial/territorial organization actively involved in furthering the objectives of MCL. The Saskatchewan Literacy Network has agreed

to support this change of direction by nominating Linda Magerl and myself as the Provincial Representative Directors to MCL. The total membership of the MCL Board is 31.

Nancy Jennings is MCL's Executive Director at the offices located in Ottawa, Ontario.

To date, MCL has been active in lobbying for increased funding for national literacy initiatives, developing a post-election strategy paper which outlines issues and strategies for the upcoming year, and working closely with the National Literacy Secretariat.

On behalf of the SLN Board of Directors, I ask for your support as MCL focuses on the importance of literacy programming and funding across Canada. This programming is essential if each of us is to meet the educational and training demands of the future.

E. Duane Rose is the Saskatchewan Representative to the MCL Board

Learners have greater input to MCL

by Lynda Magerl

The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) is a Canada wide organization that lobbies the government on behalf of Literacy in Canada.

There have been a lot of changes made in the Board this year.

This is the first year that half of the Board is made up of students. One student and the head of one coalition in the province represents each province.

I went to the Board meeting in November in Montreal, where this change took place. It took six years to effect this change.

Thanks to SABEA (Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association) I was able to attend. At that time I took the information that I gathered from around the province and presented it to the Board. I would like to thank all that took time to send back replies.

Also at the meeting, we discussed and set up strategies for literacy concerns, the need for ongoing literacy funding, input into federal retraining programs, prison literacy, aboriginal literacy, and workplace literacy!

The MCL has been very busy since November. They have had a meeting with the government and the 10 percent cut in literacy funding made under the previous government has been reinstated in the new budget. That means that a lot of programs can continue that would not otherwise have been available.

MCL had just put together a 12-page brief that was presented to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. Some of the points are:

- if they invest the money in literacy it will be an investment for the future;
- that everybody has the right to an education;
- training people for jobs is important.

It is a very involved document and very important to us as students.

The brief recommends the adoption of a Canadian Literacy Act which would guarantee literacy programs to everybody in Canada who needs them. It would establish literacy as a human right, on the same level as health care, food, and shelter. The document states that cutting back on social programs is not the way to address the difficult problem and that the poverty of Canada has to be addressed along with literacy.

I would like to stress how important it is to have student learners on Saskatchewan boards and Canadian boards. The people involved, like yourselves, need to be involved.

My term of office in MCL will be up in 1995. So, if any of you are interested keep in mind we will need a replacement for me. Students need a voice.

Again I'd like to thank SABEA for letting me participate in a great learning experience.

Lynda Magerl is an SLN Board Member and Saskatchewan Learner Representative on the MCL Board

Resource Review

Spelling it out & In French:

Illiteracy and literacy training among francophones in Canada

The report was researched and written by Andrée Boucher. It was produced by the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes in collaboration with Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada.

Reviewed by Nayda Veeman

The publication provides an overview of the literacy issues facing francophones in Canada.

This 140 page report gives a thorough description of francophone literacy issues in Canada. It begins with a general discussion about the significance of low literacy levels and then gives a profile of francophone literacy levels and programming in each province and region.

It is of note that literacy levels of the francophone population are uniformly lower than English literacy levels. The report analyzes this finding and makes recommendations about how the problem should be addressed. The report will be of interest to anyone concerned with literacy issues generally, but it is of particular interest to policy-makers, administrators and program planners.

La formation aux adultes en Saskatchewan est l'affaire du Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes (SFEA)

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Lessons learned from Tanzania

by Nayda Veeman

In February 1994, I had the opportunity to spend two weeks in Tanzania as a consultant in the second phase of the Sustaining Literacy project which began in June, 1993. This project is a collaboration between SIAST International and the Tanzanian Department of Adult Education and it is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The background of this project was reported in *Literacy Works* 5.1.

Tanzania has been a favourite of many donor countries because of its progressive social policies including free universal primary education, health care, and other public programs and much has been written about development efforts there. I want to highlight some things that stood out for me as a result of the reading which I did and the people that I talked to in Tanzania.

Learner-centred literacy programs

The goals of the original mass literacy campaign were to achieve universal literacy so that everyone could participate in the political process and peasants could be taught how to produce new cash crops. While these were worthy goals, they came from the leaders rather than the immediate needs of the people.¹

In the countryside, people work during the daylight hours. Women often spend hours walking for firewood and water in addition to cooking and field work because of the widespread shortage of these essentials.² After sunset, at 6 p.m., reading is difficult as there is no electricity in most villages. There is a general lack of reading materials due to the shortage of paper, books and newspapers.

Add to these physical realities the fact that Tanzanians are a very sociable people. One of my strongest images of rural life is groups of people seated under the shade of a tree talking as they take a rest. Another challenge is that there are 120 different languages in Tanzania so that although most people speak Swahili, the national language, it is not their first language. According to Friere and Macedo, literacy programs are most successful when they start with the mother tongue language.³

The Sustaining Literacy project is designed to let people define their own needs. Given the many physical and cultural factors working

against literacy, it will be interesting to see how villagers will define their literacy needs.

The meaning of limited resources

Funding shortages for literacy programs in Canada is a constant concern. The following observations help to put Canadian funding problems in perspective:

1. A grade 7 classroom of 104 pupils in a middle class neighbourhood in Dar es Salaam, the largest city.
2. Rural libraries with no books.
3. Paper shortages which mean rural newspapers cannot be printed.
4. A shortage of qualified teachers at both elementary and secondary school levels.
5. Classrooms with no blackboards, books or resources.
6. Estimates that as low as 50 percent of school-age children attend school; some parents keep children out of school to help in the fields (in part because of the lack of books and teachers and they do not see schooling leading to jobs).

The importance of optimism

Despite these very difficult circumstances, Tanzanians remain optimistic and cheerful. I felt privileged to have this opportunity to return to East Africa. Ever since teaching in Malawi (a small country south of Tanzania) 20 years ago, I have dreamed of returning to Africa. It was a privilege to learn about literacy in Tanzania since the government has had such a strong commitment to adult education from the time of independence.

I was impressed by the optimism and good humour of all those involved with the project. Many positive things are happening and it is important to focus on what can be done rather than how much there is to do.

¹ Kadege, et al. *Peasants and Educators: A study of the literacy environment in rural Tanzania*. Commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Dar es Salaam, and the Swedish International Development Authority, Stockholm (Jan/Feb 1992).

² *Tanzania with a Gender Perspective*. ED DIV Doc #53, SIDA.

³ Friere, Paulo and Donald Macedo. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc. Mass (1987).

Nayda Veeman is Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

Leçons apprises en Tanzanie

par Nayda Veeman

En février 1994, j'ai eu l'occasion de passer deux semaines en Tanzanie comme conseillère à la phase 2 d'un projet d'alphabétisation qui a débuté en juin 1993. Le projet est une collaboration entre SIAST (l'Institut des arts, des sciences et de la technologie de la Saskatchewan) et le département tanzanien de l'éducation des adultes avec les fonds de l'ACDI (l'Association canadienne de développement international). La description de ce projet d'alphabétisation a déjà été faite dans le volume 5.1 de *Literacy Works*. Dans ce numéro-ci, je veux mettre en évidence les aspects qui sont ressortis de ma lecture et mes rencontres avec les gens de la Tanzanie.

Je me suis sentie privilégiée d'avoir eu cette occasion de retourner en Afrique de l'est. J'ai enseigné au Malawi (un petit pays au sud de la Tanzanie) il y a vingt ans et j'ai toujours rêvé d'y retourner. Je me suis intéressée particulièrement à apprendre davantage sur l'alphabétisation en Tanzanie car il y a un fort engagement de la part du gouvernement quant à l'éducation des adultes et ceci, depuis l'acte de l'indépendance. La Tanzanie est préférée par les pays donateurs à cause de ses politiques sociales très progressistes, y compris l'éducation primaire universelle et gratuite, les soins de santé, etc.

L'importance des programmes centrés sur les apprenants/es

Les buts de la campagne originale d'alphabétisation des masses étaient d'atteindre l'alphabétisation universelle pour que 1) tout le monde puisse participer au processus politique et 2) pour augmenter la production agricole avec gains financiers immédiats. Ces buts étaient louables mais ils ne reflétaient pas les besoins immédiats du peuple.

A la campagne, les gens travaillent à la lumière du jour. Les femmes passent souvent beaucoup de leur temps en marchant à la recherche du bois de chauffage et de l'eau en plus de leur tâches ménagères et leur travail dans les champs, tout ceci à cause d'un manque répandu de ces éléments essentiels. Quand le soleil se couche à 18h00, il n'y a pas d'électricité dans les villages donc la lecture du

soir se fait très difficilement. Il y a un manque général de matériel de lecture causé par la pénurie de papier, de livres et des journaux. Ajoutez à ces réalités physiques:

a) le fait que les Tanzaniens soient un peuple très sociable; une des images les plus fortes pour moi de la vie en campagne est de voir des groupes de personnes assises à l'abri d'un arbre parlant et se reposant ensemble.

b) il y a 120 langues différentes en Tanzanie, alors que la plupart des gens parlent Swahili, la langue nationale, ce n'est pas leur langue maternelle. Selon Friere et Macedo, les programmes d'alphabétisation ont le plus grand succès quand nous commençons avec la première langue acquise.

Le sens de ressources limitées

Pendant mon travail en alphabétisation au Canada, le manque d'appui financier est un souci constant. Les observations suivantes aident à mettre nos problèmes en perspective.

a) Une salle de classe de 104 élèves en 7e année dans un quartier de classe moyenne dans la ville capitale.

b) Bibliothèques rurales sans livres.

c) Pénuries de papier au point où les journaux locaux ne peuvent pas être imprimés.

d) Écoles primaires composées d'enseignants avec leur 7e années seulement; cela est causé par un manque de personnes formées en enseignement.

e) Salles de classe sans tableau noir, livres ou ressources.

f) Il est estimé que seulement 50 pourcent des enfants d'âge scolaire fréquentent l'école à cause d'un manque de ressources et aussi parce que l'instruction ne mène pas à l'emploi.

L'optimisme et la bonne humeur

En dépit de ces circonstances très difficiles, les Tanzaniens demeurent optimistes et de bonne humeur. Les choses positives se produisent et la chose importante, c'est de mettre l'accent sur ce qui peut être fait et non pas sur combien il reste à faire.

Regional Reports

Literacy in Transition: Northlands College

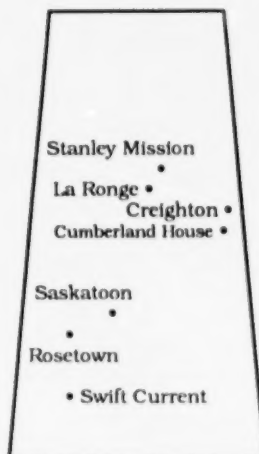
by Geraldine Rediron

Our current setup for literacy programming in the north is in the form of three literacy facilitators; one in the east (Tiffany Mucha), one on the west (myself) and one in the central region (Lynne Dunning).

Our regions are completely distinct from one another. We have a total of 40 communities that need literacy programming. But the average population per community varies from 50 to 5,000. Each region expresses different needs, so our program varies from region to region in order to better suit the needs of the community and the individual learner.

Reading Circle, offered at the Kikinahk friendship centre in La Ronge is for children ages five to 12. It is an after school project with a volunteer tutor. It has a very good attendance, and its goal is to encourage reading among young children.

Youth Projects involve peer youth tutoring in two communities in the North. We selected Stanley Mission, due to its high teen suicide



rate. The tutor is available every afternoon at the church meeting room.

The other community is Cumberland House, with the aid of the guidance counsellor, we selected senior students who will be available to tutor "high risk drop-outs."

First Language Literacy facilitates learning in the language of the learner. The languages are primarily Cree and Dené. The process starts with a paid tutor who instructs in the language of the learner for the first 20 hours; then they follow through with English. The need for first language literacy is

overwhelming, especially in the North. We are in the process of producing a video and a tutor handbook. We believe our fly-in communities need to benefit from qualified tutor training, so we developed a video for them so they can experience the tutor/learner relationship first hand.

The tutor in Creighton will be developing an aboriginal cookbook in plain English.

Parent/Child literacy story hour is funded with a Wellness Grant and is running as a six-week project at Kikinahk Friendship centre in La Ronge. It is geared to teen parents and their pre-school children. The purpose is to encourage parents to read with and to their children. The "Alfred" series is used as reading material, then given to each family to take home as their own.

Simplified Driver Training Handbook meets an enormous need for goal-specific learning. Currently we have one course running in the three areas. Enrolment is as high as 52 in the central region, 46 in the west and 20 in the east.

We are currently looking into the area of family literacy. We hope to have programming in the fall.

To date we have over 180 tutors and learners.

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de votre participation au développement
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READ Saskatoon

by Sylvia Vicq, Read Saskatoon

READ Saskatoon, founded in 1979, is a community-based volunteer literacy organization. It is a unique literacy organization for several reasons: there is no formal affiliation with a library or educational institution; it is a registered charitable organization; and, perhaps most unique of all, there is no central office.

In 1993, 251 tutors helped 266 learners in our three programs. Besides the main adult program, READ Saskatoon operates a Learning Centre particularly for First Nations people in Friendship Inn. The third program, at the YMCA, is Project READY for "disadvantaged" youth. This program is supported by Literacy Corps funding from Human Resources and Labour Canada.

READ Saskatoon is managed by an elected Board of Directors (tutors and Learners) and a paid staff of three. Also on the Board are representatives from the Saskatoon Public Library, SIAST Kelsey Institute and the community at large. A total of four Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit have been received by tutors, learners and staff of READ.

Currently, READ Saskatoon is involved in two projects funded by the National Literacy Secretariat. *Literacy Needs Assessment for Saskatoon* will be completed by April 30. Aboriginal persons, persons with physical and mental disabilities, teen parents and "at risk" youth, as well as community agencies that work with these groups, have been surveyed regarding literacy needs and services that will more successfully meet the needs of these groups.

The second project is entitled *Improving Access to Basic Education for Adults with Physical and Cognitive Disabilities*. READ Saskatoon and SIAST Kelsey Institute are partners for this research. We hope to establish a demonstration project for those adults with more severe disabilities.

Cypress Hills Regional College Regional literacy meeting

*by Donna Banks
Literacy Partnerships Co-ordinator*

On March 30, 1994, Cypress Hills Regional College hosted a Regional Literacy Meeting to discuss various issues and concerns. Thirty-nine people attended: 13 learners, six tutors, and nine literacy practitioners with the remaining 11 represented nine different agencies.

The goal of the Cypress Hills Regional College Literacy Meeting was to facilitate an exchange of information between individuals/agencies/organizations interested in or involved with literacy.

Nayda Veeman, Executive Director of the SLN, provided statistical information regarding literacy levels in our province and country. The role of the Network is to provide information about literacy activities and to encourage discussion of literacy issues.

Cypress Hills Regional College Program Profiles were led by Program Director Duane Rose. Mr. Rose stressed the importance of student-centred, student-directed programs. Descriptions of Cypress Hills Regional College literacy programs served to further illustrate this point:

1. Adult Basic Education/English as a Second Language - Adeline Steinley, ABE/ESL Literacy Co-ordinator
2. PALS - Ron Cronan, Assistant Co-ordinator/Instructor
3. Literacy Partnerships - Donna Banks, Literacy Partnerships Co-ordinator
4. Mentors - Patricia Lockhart, Maple Creek Mentor

Donna Woloshyn of Saskatchewan Education, Training, and Employment explained the changes that have occurred in the department's organizational structure.

Lynda Magerl was in the "Learner Spotlight". Mrs. Magerl has been involved with literacy for

Regional Reports

Cypress Hills Regional College (continued)

many years - as learner, student advocate and board member of the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) and the SLN.

A panel of business, student, college administration, literacy program and SLN representatives addressed literacy issues.

Their comments stimulated a great deal of discussion surrounding three main issues:

1. Identification of literacy issues.
2. Recognition of existing programs and suggestions for more effective delivery.
3. Development of action plans to address the concerns/issues identified.

Small group discussion followed and generated a number of comments:

Topic #1 - What are the issues/concerns?

- Public awareness needs to be heightened.
- Programs lack continuity, rob learners of the option to set long-term goals. Funding must be available for program delivery as well as project development.
- Instructor/tutor training: More emphasis should be placed on teaching adults with learning difficulties/limitations/disabilities. Develop tutor training standards?
- Family literacy: Develop programs that involve the entire family.
- Curriculum: Should reflect student-centred and student-directed study.
- Partnerships: Agencies need to be sensitive to the special needs of their clients.
- Business/community involvement: Need to support literacy initiatives and accept the idea that literacy is everybody's business.

Topic #2 - What is already happening?

- Learner Support Groups are seen as being very important to building confidence and creating a sense of belonging.
- ABC television ads and similar publicity campaigns serve to raise awareness. Contact with service clubs, community groups/organizations, education institutions will help to further this cause.
- On-the-job literacy training received many positive reviews. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool literacy project was cited as an example.
- Individualized, independent study continues

to address the needs of many students.

- Tutor-learner pairs are viewed very positively. However, a tutor did suggest that the tutor training include more information on adult learning.

Topic #3 - What is to be done?

- Cypress Hills Regional College will consider the preparation of a Learner Support Group Handbook. The purpose will be to provide a framework for learners interested in organizing a group or restructuring an existing one. Ken Severight, Parkland Regional College literacy student and SLN board member, is willing to visit colleges to talk about his experience with Learner Support Groups. Contact Ken at 783-8949 for more information.
- Investigate tutor certification by contacting colleges involved with tutor training. Contact SABEA to suggest topics for instructor in-service.
- Continue to devote time to raising public awareness. Make presentations to community organizations, businesses, etc. in an effort to bring to light the need for community supported literacy programs.

What happens next?

Clearly, the issues/concerns raised at the meeting must be addressed if we hope to meet increased student and community demand for literacy programming. Policy makers must consider these issues/concerns in the decision making process. Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment could lead the way by re-evaluating its commitment to funding program delivery.

Errata

Literacy Works 5.3 (Spring 1994)

On p.34 "Cypress Hills Community College" should have read "Cypress Hills Regional College". On p.35 Regina City "Regional College" should have read Regina "Literacy Association." *Literacy Works* apologizes for any misunderstandings caused by our error.

Prairie West Regional College

The Literacy program was given a face lift in September 1993 and is growing steadily.

Participation rates as of February 1994 are:

	Engaged	Waiting	Total
Tutors	26	25	51
Learners	28	5	33

Group Participation: 30

The Rosetown Reading Support Group is the model that will be used to establish tutor support groups throughout the region. The group meets every month to share experiences, review books and glean new ideas -- as well as booster each other's morale.

The Learner Transition Project, funded through the National Literacy Secretariat, involves the research and adaption of appropriate resources for learners at the stage of existing tutor programs, but not for the 5/10 program. Materials, resources, and lists will be available in August -- just in time for the fall 1994 term.



Ray Meiklejohn, left, delivers a \$8,200 grant from the Literacy Foundation to Carlton Trail Regional College. Accepting are principal Lorne Johnson and Bev Gutenberg, PALS lab instructor.
Humboldt Journal photo.

Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation Grants

The Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation has completed the allocation of its 1993 Grants. The following is a list of recipient

AMGITS	\$ 12,124.00
Carlton Trail Regional College	8,200.00
Menno Homes	17,320.00
One Sky	2,930.00
Palliser Institute	7,598.00
Parkland Regional College	10,000.00
Prince Albert Literacy Network	1,859.00
Radius Tutoring	2,052.00
Regina Home Economics for Living Project	3,565.00
Saskatoon Police Service	17,582.10
South Saskatchewan Reading Council	700.00
YMCA	16,650.00

TOTAL \$100,580.10



John Foster, co-ordinator, Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation, presents \$1,859 to the Prince Albert Literacy Network represented by Hilda McKenzie, program participant, and Elsie Livingston, right, volunteer workshop leader. In addition, a free children's book was given to each person in the library learners event.
Prince Albert Herald photo.

Network News

Board Updates

Call for nominations

The Network is looking for new Board members to fill the vacancies which will come up in September. The Board meets about six times per year and provides a great chance to get involved and to learn about literacy issues. If you would like more information, please call the office. We'd like to hear from you.

1994-95 project activities

The Network will concentrate on strengthening partnerships in the areas of family literacy, regional literacy activities, literacy resources, aboriginal literacy and computer networking.

Across the Network Desk

Older adult literacy resource manual

The Seniors' Education Group, University of Regina, is developing a manual for use by literacy practitioners who work with seniors. This manual is designed to supplement existing literacy materials with information about the special needs and concerns of older learners. Call (306)779-4816 for information.

Curriculum for women in literacy

Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women is currently selecting 15 women to write a curriculum which will address women's ways of learning and issues of concern to women. The initial working meeting will be held in June, 1994. Call CLOW (416) 699-1909 for information.

Interagency forums

The first forum was held in Swift Current on March 31; a second is scheduled for Regina May 12. The satellite reception sites for the Family Literacy Seminar on September 30 provide an opportunity for forums in other locations. For information call the Network.

Forward planning

The annual board/staff retreat will be held June 3 and 4 at Echo Valley Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle. The goal is to finalize the Network's 1994-95 action plan and budget.

Celebrating family and community

Conference and Annual Meeting, September 30th - October 1st, 1993
(see announcement on page 5)

Plain language workshops

Sharon Skage, former editor of *On Our Way*, will be conducting the first workshop in response to a request by a Saskatoon agency (June, 1994). Following this, other Plain Language Workshops will be offered upon request.

Cost-shared funding changes

The Department and the National Literacy Secretariat, in consultation with literacy practitioners in the province, have decided that from now on this funding will be available to community groups provided that they form a partnership with at least one other eligible, non-profit organization.

For this year, projects in the following categories will be considered:

- Family literacy
- Aboriginal literacy
- Youth-in-transition literacy
- Rural Transition
- Adults with special needs
- Workplace literacy

The change in eligibility will result in a greater diversity of projects. In future, the Network Literacy Program committee should be able to provide valuable input to the development of project ideas.

Congratulations to *Literacy Works* editor

Liz Ormiston and her husband Ian Rogers, on the birth of their second child, a son, Caleb Jericho Tregloan Rogers. Caleb was born on March 30, was 20.5 inches long and weighed in at 8 lb., 14 oz.

SASKATCHEWAN LITERACY NETWORK

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N.B. Les Abonnements à Literacy Works prennent fin avec ce numéro-ci. Veuillez renouveler votre abonnement/membre pour continuer à recevoir Literacy Works.

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Apprenant/te - Étudiant/e	15\$
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** Ceux et celles avec abonnement simple
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Adresse _____

Ville _____ Code postal _____

Téléphone: maison _____ travail _____

Employeur/École _____

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| ☐ Membre institution - 50\$ | ☐ droit d'emprunt - 25\$ |
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